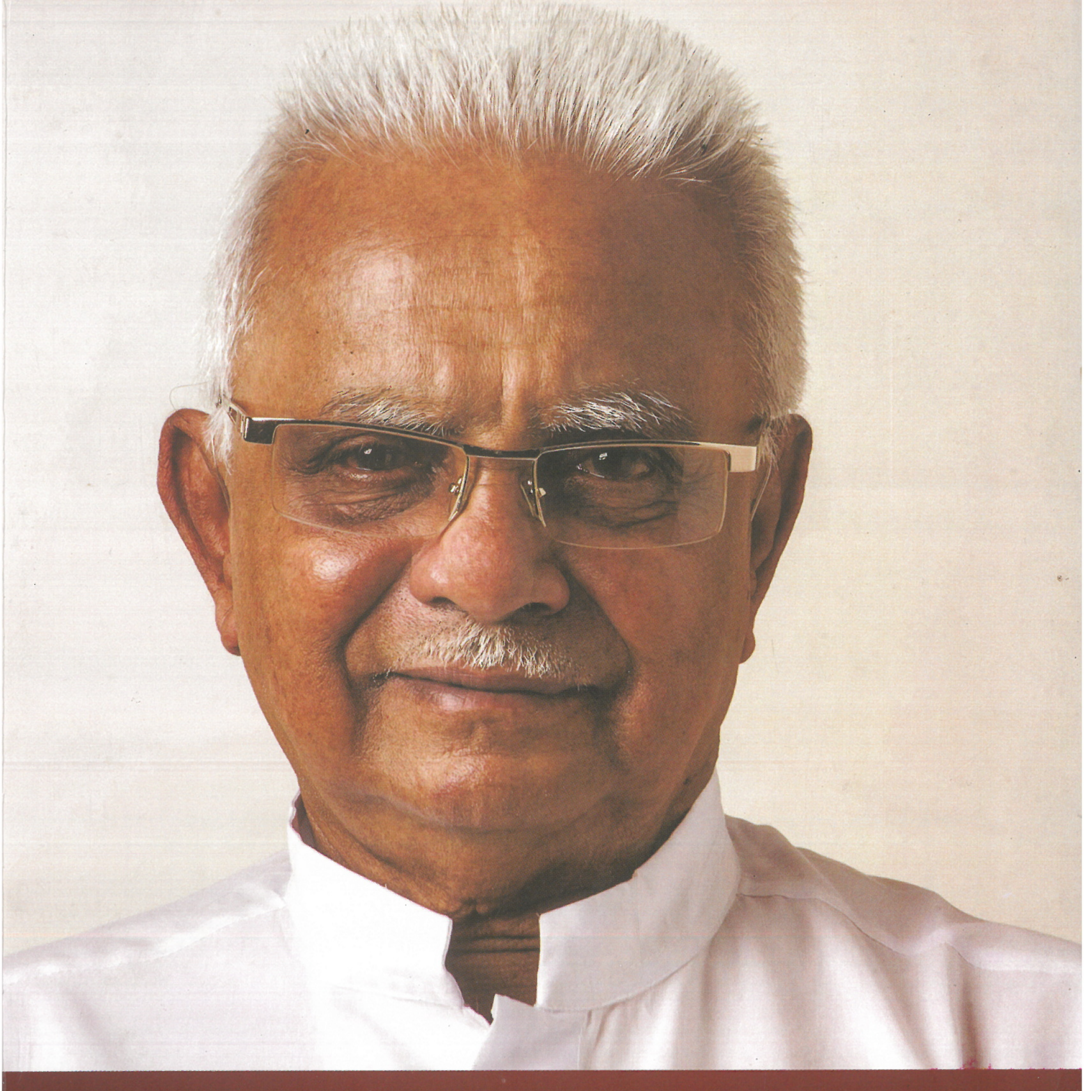
A.T. Ariyaratne



BHAVA THANHA

Vol. 3

An Autobiography

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Bhava Thanha

An Autobiography

Third Volume

A.T. Ariyaratne

A. T. Ariyaratne

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For translating most parts of this book from Sinhala.
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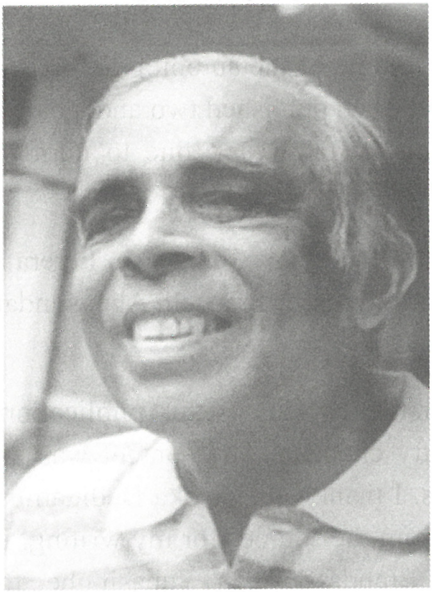

I dedicate the third volume of Bhava Thanha to
Professor Nandasena Rathnapala
of The University of Sri Jayawardanapura
Who influenced me to embrace the classical field concurrently
While paving the way for a nonviolent social revolution.

A. T. Ariyaratne

FORWARD

This is the third volume of the autobiography, Bhava Thanha. This volume could have been published two and a half years ago as I had completed the volume. However, due to numerous obstacles the publication was delayed.

I am grateful to Professor Tennyson Perera for writing the Introduction and to Professor Praneeth Abeysundara, who wrote the word of Epilogue.

Similar to the first two volumes this publication also consists of approximately fifty chapters. The content was extracted from my diaries and letters. I thank Miss Asoka Dedigamuwa for organizing the information from the sources for my writing. I thank Mr. Anura Peiris and Mr. Eranda Nishan Subasinghe for arranging the photographs for the volume. I thank Mr. K. L. Gunawardana for editing the Sinhala version of the volume. I also thank Ms. Rose Perera, Mr. D. A. Perera and Miss S. N. Weragoda for the English translation and editing.

I thank all who helped me with information provision and by contributing writings for several chapters.

I am grateful for Ms. Pushpa Ranjani for her time and effort in organizing and typing the Sinhala volume.

Finally I thank journalist Tissa Jayawardane for finalizing the book for printing and Mr. Hemantha Gamage of Sarvodaya Vishwa Lekha for printing the book.

I explained in the forward and introduction of the first and second volumes the purpose of writing this autobiography. I shall not repeat it here. I hope this book also would be exemplary for the future generations.

Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne

No. 114, 'Samudana'
Rawathawatte Road,
Moratuwa,
2017 May

Introduction

It is an undebatable truth that a readers courage and personality is influenced for growth through perusing life stories of great men who have devotedly served their country and have a wealth of experience to offer. Reading such biographies offer numerous ideals to one's life. Especially reading the life story of a community leader who has selflessly dedicated his life to serve the public is a sensational experience.

During the end of the 1950s decade the effort of a young teacher from Nalanda College to aid a desolate impoverished community through a small shramadana campaign unexpectedly grew to be the initiation of a nationwide community development project. This initiation was not a mere dream but was a reality that was acclaimed by the international community recognizing Lanka Jathika Sarvodaya Shramadana Society as a renowned voluntary organization. I consider it a privilege to be able to write the introduction for the third volume of Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne's autobiography which is the revelation of this story.

The readers of the first and second volumes of Bhava Thanha would have experienced the humbleness of Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne. The simplicity of the conveyance of ideas keeps the reader continuously interested, a style which continuous into the third and fourth volumes. The lessons the reader could receive from an autobiography is immense. It is no exaggeration to say that these books are examples of such wealth.

It is no small task that Dr. A. T. Ariyartne undertook in establishing the Sarvodaya concept of Mahatma Gandhi in Sri Lanka adding the essence of Buddhism within the function of the Sarvodaya Movement. The mammoth effort and courage exemplified in turning a small sharamadana campaign into the magnificent tree of Sarvodaya today is a glorious praiseworthy task. Sarvodaya is an organization for social revolution and is a Movement that was established to reform society eradicating social inequality and injustice.

Bhava Thanha offers a trove of knowledge as from Dr. Ariyaratne's own words it speaks of the issues challenges and humiliations that materialized during the journey of Sarvodaya. There's no one in the present society who doesn't know about Sarvodaya. This success was due to the meritorious leadership of Dr. Ariyaratne.

“Sarvodaya” can be defined as directing one's time, thoughts and strength for the development of all. The development of an individual based on the personality development which leads to the development of the village is called “Gramodaya”. The development of the country through the development of the village is called “Deshodaya”. For this to materialize each individual is required to share work as brothers and execute each other's responsibilities. The Sarvodaya concept is different to the contemporary village and social development. It is a concept that encompasses the use of resources in a village towards its sustainable development. The decisions are also made by the residents of the village. Bhava Thanha third volume also reveals teachings of the principles and philosophy Sarvodaya inculcates for the material development and peaceful coexistence of the villagers.

This volume includes many speeches that were made on international visits by Dr. Ariyaratne. It further, reveals the awards which were received for the service rendered and the background of reasons for bestowing such awards. Through these lectures one could understand the service Sarvodaya rendered to the society on its journey and the philosophy that made such a service a possibility. I feel that including the details and backgrounds of the social service rendered and social leaders of the institutions that presented these awards to Sarvodaya provide important knowledge to all.

Bhava Thanha distinguishes its style structure of presenting from the autobiographies of numerous writers and world leaders. Dr. Ariyaratne has been able to humbly present the kind hospitality shown on his international journeys by his hosts. He also has been able to speak of the harm and sabotage inflicted upon this humanitarian organization with equanimity.

In truth Dr. Ariyaratne's life was no bed of roses. From the volumes one and two also it highlights that since the beginning of this journey he was faced with numerous thorny experiences. It is no secret that this leader faced all such hardships with astounding mental power and strength. The young social leaders can derive ample lessons from Dr. Ariyaratne's life story. His nature of serenity and peaceful composure in situations of chaos is one prominent feature of his personality. The Buddhist saying “Nahi Verena Verani” “Hate cannot quench hate”; is exemplified by his personality where Bhava Thanha reveals how Dr. Ariyaratne faced enmity with equanimity and courage.

Reading this book gives the understanding of the personality and philosophy of a leader who forgives and treats equally even those who ungratefully use and oppose him. I wish to end my introduction of this noble man who tirelessly work on behalf of peace and the poor, with an extract of his own words.

“I believe that the first thing to be understood is that, it is meaningless to only measure the quantifiable social, political and economic development of humans. It is equally important to give prominence to the development of spirituality. The efforts directed towards such an achievement is successful only if those efforts conform to the spiritual, cultural and behavioral value linkages of the people's life styles.”

Professor B. A.Tennyson Perera
Social and Human Science Department,
University of Sri Jayewardenepura,
Nugegoda.

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THEY HAVE LEFT US THEY WILL BE WITH US SOON

Some persons whom I loved and who were very close to me are no longer there. Although they are not in physical form visible to us, in my memory they are ever present. At times I remember what they did and what they said. Then I get the feeling that they have not left me but have gone on a long journey to a distant place and their absence is temporary. There appears to be a hidden memory in a corner of my consciousness that they might come back to us in a short while.

Reflecting on the demise of my relatives, the first deathbed scene is of my grandmother which took place in 1940. There is also a faint remembrance of the passing away of the Senior Monk of our temple in 1937. My grandmother's death still lingers in my memory undisturbed. The next sad event was the death of my dear father on 29th April 1970.

This event brought much sorrow within me. *Siri Aiya* (elder cousin Siri) died on 9th December 1970 followed by my *Punchi Nenda's* (younger aunt) death on 21st September. Then in 1976 *Bappochchi* (younger uncle) too died. All these have been mentioned in detail in the first volume of Bhava Thanha.

A common feature in all the above events of parting away for good is that all of them stated that they were dying on that particular day, the day of their death and faced death bravely. Siri Aiya sold the properties and lived in a rented house near Kuttam Pokuna in

Anuradhapura spending his time visiting places of worship and meditating. He visited me, complaining of breathlessness when I was living in Maradana. He went with me to the General Hospital and got himself admitted. I went to see him every day, morning and afternoon.

One afternoon he said, "Malli, (younger brother) I am going away tonight. Inform Nittambuwe Mr. Seneviratne and Danny *Aiya* (elder brother Danny). Please have the last rites performed at your place and have the final event at Kanatta. After that only inform the relatives. "As Siri Aiya used to be a very jovial person with jokes at hand always, I did not take him seriously. I also responded, "Good, good I shall do so" and left him to join a dinner at Hotel Taprobane in honour of Mr. Maitripala Senanayake, who was appointed Acting Prime Minister. He was an old Nalandian.

Siri Aiya on the extreme left with Danny aiya in the middle and L. A. Perera mudalali

Our driver Piyadasa Aiya came to the hotel and told me of Siri Aiya's death half an hour later. Honouring the last wish of Siri Aiya, Neetha, my family members, and some others from Nittambuwa got together and performed the last religious rites at the funeral, headed by the senior monk of the Nalanda Temple, Ven. Pandit Hissalle Gnana Wimala Nayaka Thero. Those invited to the alms giving in memory of Siri Aiya blamed me for not informing them of his funeral. When friends and relatives mentioned about their ignorance of Siri Aiya's death I informed them that he was hospitalized at the time of his death and I only carried out his last wish.

My respect goes in equal shares to my mother, to *Budu Nenda* (aunt full of virtue) and to Punchi Nenda (younger aunt). I loved them all. But the fact remains that the major share of my love goes to Punchi Nenda who carried me for hours, lulling me to sleep on her lap. I sat on her lap very often and she would not have her food until I returned from school. I had requested Unawatuna home people that even if Punchi Nenda had a headache that I should be informed. On the morning of June 7th 1973 *Punchi Akka* (elder sister) telephoned to inform me that Punchi Nenda had suffered heart pain and that Dr Seneviratne had been called to treat her. I left Moratuwa in the jeep and by 5.00 pm. I was at Unawatuna main house. Punchi Nenda had a long chat with me and assured me that she was well, and for me to get back as I was a busy person and if she felt bad that I would be informed. I returned to Moratuwa and that night itself Punchi Nenda closed her eyes for good.

Budu Nenda spent her last days at our home in Moratuwa. My wife Neetha and the children attended to all her needs. She had completed 100 years and fell ill suddenly, we took her to Asiri Hospital and as no medical support would help her, we brought her home and took care of her. She had a peaceful death fully aware that she was dying.

There are six of us in the family, two elder sisters, two younger sisters and my younger brother. The elder sister before me fell ill suddenly and had to undergo surgery at the General Hospital, Galle. She recovered well and was living with us at Moratuwa. Neetha and I had to participate to a celebration in Gandhi Gram, Madurai. We were at the hotel when, at about 11pm we had to answer the door bell to find Mr. Mariappan and his son, Senthil Kumar, bringing us the sad news that my elder sister had passed away about an hour back. This is the first parting away of a person from our group of six. This was my sister just elder to me, a treasure to my family and me.

Punchi Akka Lalana

It was furthest away from my mind that she would give me the occasion to reflect on the impermanent nature of life on earth, so soon. With a very heavy heart we went to Mr. Mariappan's residence and made a telephone call home to obtain the details. We were left with no other alternative but to leave Trichi airport on the 4th. Charika and the rest of my children were very close to this aunt. She was the closest to me also.

We arrived at the Trichi Airport where we met District Judge Wigneswaran who had visited Swami Premananda. The airplane reached Katunayake even before the scheduled time and we rushed home to Moratuwa. Words cannot explain the grief in me when I saw the dead body of my sister.

Religious rites were performed and we left to Unawatuna accompanying the hearse. My younger brother Weere had made all arrangements for the funeral at Unawatuna. Honouring my sister's wish, the funeral took a very simple form. We cremated her physical body and a coconut sapling was planted on the grave. Her life was simple. So was her end.

I was very sad over an illness of my younger brother Weere, and my sister leaving us for good, made me concentrate more on spiritual side of life. In our Movement too, there were a few people engaged in betrayals and acting irresponsibly which made me more ill at ease in this world of five senses. The majority in the Movement was following the Sarvodaya path and this made me refrain from doing what I was contemplating on.

The Niwano Peace Foundation of Japan awarded me the Niwano Peace Prize and with the twenty million yen I received from them I laid the foundation of the A. T. Ariyaratne Charitable Trust, the trustees being Neetha, Charika, Upali, Vinya, Jeevan, Hasanthi, Sadeewa, Diyath, Nimna, Walter and Daya Mutucumarana. At the auspicious time of 10.53 am on 24th December, 1994 the Trust Deed was signed. Preethi Dharmasiri acted as the lawyer. It was a very joyful event. There was occasion to think about non-attachment. My wife Neetha and the children supported me whole-heartedly which made me happy.

Most of the persons who looked after me, who showered love on me and cared for me are no longer there. But I live with them daily. After every meritorious act of mine, I never forget to bestow merit on them. This may be a good practice directing others to the Dhamma. It may be helping the poor. It may be a drinking water system for the innocent poor who are without drinking water. All these fall into the category of merit acquiring deeds. It is my feeling that as much as we exchange ideas with our friends and relations on the telephone, we communicate with the departed by bestowing merit on them. Sometimes we dream of the people who have left us. On such occasions we perform meritorious deeds such as alms giving to bestow merit.

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MY MOTHER DEPARTS FOR GOOD

I decided to write a chapter on the death of my mother. This sad event took place at 4 a.m. on 16th May 1991. Two days prior to her death she appeared healthy attending to her personal needs joyfully. I feel that she abandoned hopes for a prolonged life on receiving news of an unexpected nature.

As much as this period was a very unfortunate one for the people of Sri Lanka, so was it for us too. Human rights were at the rock bottom. The association I had with the then Prime Minister Hon. R. Premadasa was marred due to this reason. Until 1988 I was a guest speaker at the *Gam Udawa* (Village Awakening) celebrations. I refused to participate in the 1988 function as the government was acting in undemocratic ways and was fully aware that the Prime Minister was very cross with me. After the then Prime Minister became the President of Sri Lanka I severed all connections with him. Within one week of Mr R. Premadasa becoming the President of Sri Lanka and until his death he continued a campaign aimed at destroying me and Sarvodaya. This is mentioned elsewhere in this book and I wish not to give details here.

Persons who were jealous of me and my work started fishing in troubled waters, fully aware of the strained relationship between the late Mr. Premadasa and me.

The Presidential Commission headed by ex-Justice Raja Wanasundera to enquire into the activities of non-government organizations was made a platform to insult me, my family and

Sarvodaya. A member of this Commission who was a retired judge of the Supreme Court; President, Appeal Court and President of the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute, Justice J.F.A. Souza did not accept the proceedings of the Commission in its entirety and submitted an interim report which exonerated Sarvodaya and me of all false and framed up charges.

Although this was the true picture certain media personnel continued to insult me publishing falsehoods against me in the Lakehouse Group of Papers. Everyone knew that these efforts were intended to please the then President. One such article which appeared in Silumina (Sinhala weekend paper of Lakehouse) was shown to my mother by a colleague of hers who used to observe *'Ata Sil"* (Eight precepts) with her at our village temple. My mother who was 91 years of age was totally shocked on reading this article. We kept the news about the attack by the late President away from my mother as she was very fond of Mr. Premadasa. On one occasion he invited my mother to Temple Trees and he and Mrs. Premadasa spent hours with my mother, entertaining her.

My mother, Neetha and I with President Premadasa at Temple Trees

"Mr. Premadasa is insulting my son? Why is he doing this?" This was a repeated inquiry from my mother. From the day she read the article she became bed-ridden, never to get up again. Supported by the medical care of Dr. W.A.S. Silva, we managed to keep her alive for two weeks. I remember my mother's words "If I cannot protect my son during this birth I shall protect him during my next birth." When one abandons the desire to live, it is very easy for such a person to leave the body, when afflicted with even a minor illness. I am of the belief that my mother is protecting me still from her divine abode.

My mother on the last New Year day when she fed me with kiribath

Thousands of friends and relatives visited us to share our grief. Many ministers and individuals holding high positions in the government telephoned us and expressed their regret as to why they were unable to attend the funeral of my mother. Some were scared to speak on the telephone even! A group of over 20 C.I.D officers were sent to record the vehicle numbers of political leaders and the senior government officials who came to my house. This news was given to me by a member of the C.I.D group, in confidence. I was with high fever and the news was unbelievable.

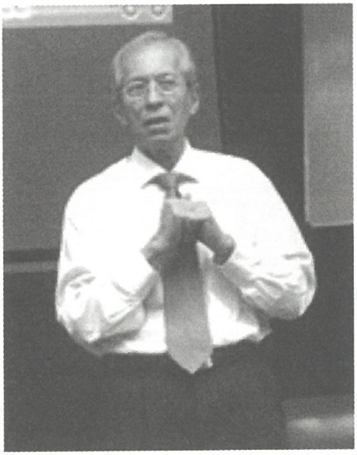
Among the ministers who attended the funeral were Tyronne Fernando and Rupa Karunatilleke. M.P. Jayawickrema Perera and General Cyril Ranatunge and General Denzil Kobbekaduwa came to condole with us. Mr. Bradman Weerakoon came into my room and spoke with me for a while.

The former Prime Minister Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike spent over 4 hours consoling us. There were over 100 Buddhist monks, invited and uninvited to perform the last rites. Even with very high fever I mentioned about the baseless allegations directed against me. This was the saddest day of my life. The late President Premadasa's government paved the way for my mother's death. Not only that even the last rites were not allowed to be performed in a dignified manner. I strongly criticized their behavior and pledged that I would fight his unjust regime to revive democratic freedoms, disregarding threats to my life.

General Denzil Kobbekaduwa with my wife Neetha and second son Jeevan

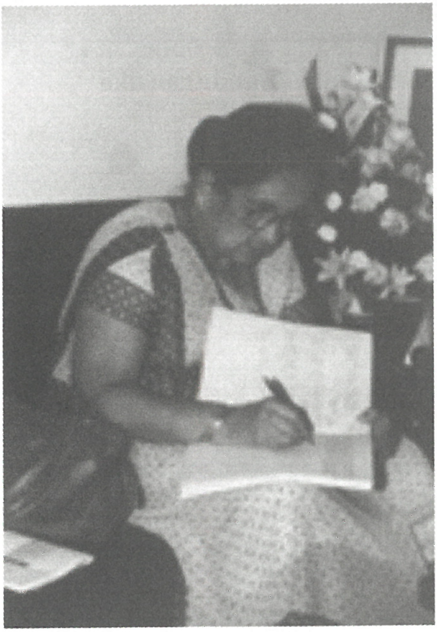
Notes in my diary

I conclude this chapter with a diary entry I made three days prior to my mother's demise.



Mr Bradman Weerakoon

13.05.1991-Fighting with shadows continues. I do not know the enemies. Last evening, at 6.20 I received a death threat. The person at the other end spoke in a very low voice, making threats and using indecent language. Within less than half a minute the call ended.



Former Prime Minister
Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike

This is the most dangerous challenge Sarvodaya and I faced. The President could stop this. But he did not attempt to stop the vilifications. I am not aware of the reasons for his anger. On principle Sarvodaya does not support any activity which is harmful to the people and the country. Sarvodaya has supported all efforts by any government when such efforts were in conformity with Sarvodaya

Former Prime Minister Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike

Pictures taken at Mother's Funeral

Funeral procession of my mother

vision. It may be that the late President is angry as Sarvodaya acts against all endeavors that appear to lead to a dictatorship.

In addition to Silumina, Dinamina, Observer, Times; yesterday, Lankadeepa joined the group in the insult campaign. When unwholesome activities raise their head the other friends of the same category join the evil group. When wholesome virtuous activities begin to surface in unison, the unwholesome evil elements recede. In the end the wholesome, virtuous activities win the day. Amidst such a scenario, I have to shoulder four tremendous responsibilities.

(1) Protect myself physically, mentally, spiritually and socially.

(2) In the same manner I have to protect my family members, Sarvodaya workers at Head office and Sarvodaya workers attached to the District Centres and at village level.

(3) Protect Sarvodaya Management and not allow it to be shattered by the persons who have risen to powerful positions through Sarvodaya but who are now supporting the government to suppress our Movement.

(4) Protect Sarvodaya Movement from other non - governmental business organizations whose intention is to weaken Sarvodaya by making use of the opportunity.

07.06.1991- This is the first occasion that I leave the country without the blessings of my mother. She used to observe 'Sil' and bestow merit on Devas and prayed to them for their blessings on me. On my part I too do the same and invoke blessings of Devas a number of times a day for my mother's well-being. Today I have to transfer merit to my mother in a different form as she is in a Deva (divine) realm now. I am sure she too is doing the same thing and protecting me from her present abode.

At 1.30 am. Today, I left Sri Lanka to Amsterdam by Air Lanka. From there I will proceed to Stockholm and Sundswal on the 9th. I am due to address the World Conference on Health. Charika, Vinya and Jeevan came to the airport to see me off. I know they came with me as they suspected that I might encounter trouble on route or at the airport.

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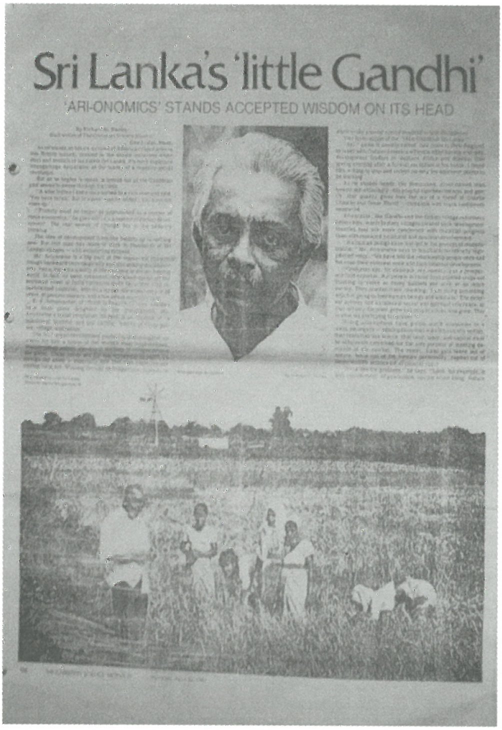
Sri Lanka's little Gandhi
'ARI-ONOMICS' Stands accepted wisdom on its head
(By Richard M. Harley- Staff Writer of The Christian Science Monitor Cambridge, Mass.)

As he stands up before a crowed of American dignitaries in this Boston suburb, dressed in the simple collarless white shirt and sandals of his native Sri Lanka, it's hard to picture Ahangamage Ariyaratne as the leader of a massive social revolution.



Sri Lanka's 'little Gandhi'

'ARI-ONOMICS' STANDS ACCEPTED WISDOM ON ITS HEAD

But as he begins to speak, a breeze out of the Gandhian past seems to sweep through the room.

"A wise Indian I knew once turned to rich man and said' you have fallen' But to a poor man he added, 'you have not risen up'

"Poverty must no longer be approached as a matter of mere economics" He goes on. "It is a matter of human development. The real source of change lies in the people's thinking."

The idea of development from the bottom up is nothing new. But this man has made it work in thousands of Sri Lankan villages - with astonishing success.

Mr. Ariyaratne is a big part of the reason his country, (though backward technologically and still scourged with poverty,) has achieved a quality of life enviable in the developing word. In fact, by some measures, this island nation off the southeast coast of India compares quite favourably with industrialized countries, with its average life expectancy of 68 years, 80 percent literacy, and a low infant mortality rate.

E. F. Schumacher of "Small is Beautiful" frame, couldn't have been more delighted by the phenomenon. Mr. Ariyaratne's social revolution, he said, is an example of "a nonviolent, truthful, and just society" worthy of every person, village, and nation.

The Sri Lankan development model could also suggest answer for half a billion of the world's most impoverished, malnourished people, who live in millions of villages around the globe. These needy are far too numerous to reach by foreign aid alone - especially now that rich countries are cutting back aid. Winning the war on hunger now depends on whether the poorest can help themselves.

This is the secret of the " Little Gandhi of Sri Lanka."

"Ari", as he is usually called, had come to New England to meet with Oxfam- America Officials after having met with development leaders in western Africa and Mexico. One spring evening after a formal reception in his honour, I found him willing to stop and reflect on way his approach seems to be working.

As he shakes hands, the diminutive, silver haired man bowed self-effacingly. His playful lightheartedness and gentle, star quality gives him the air of a blend Charlie Chaplin and Omar Sharif - complete with black toothbrush mustache.

Ariyaratne, like Gandhi and the Indian Village reformers before him, wants to steer villages clear of slick development theories that are more concerned with material progress than with mankind's cultural and spiritual development.

"We human beings have lost out in the process of modernization," Mr. Ariyaratne says in his characteristically high pitched voice. "We have lost the relationship people once had between their external work and their internal development.

"Centuries ago, for example, my country was a prosperous food exporter. But people in those days planted crops not thinking to make so many bushels per acre or so much money. They planted them, thinking, "I am doing something which is going to feed human beings and animals.'The external activity had an internal social and spiritual life, so that not only the plants life grew but people's lives also grew. This is what we are trying to recover."

Wrong assumptions have gotten world economies in a mess, he argues - assumptions that man is basically selfish, that resources are scarce, that land, labour, and capital must be efficiently combined for the sole purpose of meeting demands of the market. The result: Land gets taken out of nature, science out of popular reach.

Here lies the problem, "he says, "Land, for example, is only one element of production, not the whole thing. Nature is the whole. The moment we take land out of nature we can put on too much fertilizer in the name of increasing crops, though we poison the natural environment. For selfish reasons we may inflate the price of the food we produce, break it into pieces to multiply its money value; but you can't do that with nature.

"And so with people. We start to value their physical and mental labor only for its market price, not for the development of the human beings themselves and the whole of society."

"Ari-onomics - and its extraordinary results in Sri Lanka- have been standing conventional economic wisdom on its head for over two decades. The ingredients : high respect for nature and for beautifying the environment ; high value placed first on, human development, second on economics; stress on socially oriented work. ("you have knowledge, I have knowledge, so we can put these things together to the happiness of both of us;") ; and moving science and technology out of the university and government offices to make it accessible to the needy ("place it in the hands of the people so that new wealth can be generated for them")

Above all, he says, "measure success by the emergence of better human beings."

At first it sounds too Tolstoy - ish, too Utopian to work in today's aggressive economic climate; But Ari is convineing when he speaks about what the approach has made possible for Sri Lanka's villages.

Hundreds of thousands of rural and urban Sri Lankans have voluntarily pooled their time, labour, and resources for village improvements. In the process, he claims, caste and class barriers have been overcome. and a wide range of social services established - from constructions of schools to disaster relief; from irrigation and water purification to new farm techniques from teaching in basic sanitation to instruction in traditional Sinhalese culture.

Since the early 1960s, one in ten Sri Lankan villages have benefiled. It's made a giant difference in a country where rural villages- where 80 percent of the people live - often have no schools, where women must work several miles each day to get water, where health services are restricted to aritrained village healers; housing is poor, and poverty a crustilling reality of daily life.Even in the late'70s some 40 percent of the children still suffered from malnutrition and 1.5 million were unemployed.

"We call our effort the sarvodaya Sharamadana Movement he explains."Gandhi had coined the word Sarvodaya I "welfare of all" I In the Sri Lankan context it came to mean 'awakening of all' *Shramadana* means sharing of labor. So "Sarvodaya Sharamadana means the sharing of one's time, thought, and energy for the awakening of all."

In addition to the hundreds of thousands of villagers in the 3,600 villages, who have volunteered for Sarvodaya projects, the Movement now has about 7,500 full-time workers some with technical know-now, distributed among each of Its 24 autonomous districts. All participate at great personal sacrifice. About 6,500 are paid a subsistence wage of only $5 to $10 per month (hardly enough to live on) ; another 1,000 with more expertise get twice that.

The Sarvodaya concept first 'seized' Ari back in 1957 in a sort of peace Crops venture Sri Lanka style Then a 27 years old science teacher at a leading Prep School in Colombo, he led students and teachers into the countrymen .

"We had to travel 18 miles through jungle, park our jeep far way and then walk the rest and spend the night in dark, dingy huts made of barks of trees. Food was so scarce that some people had been living a whole week just chewing on bark.

"One evening we heard a woman yelling in great pain. We met a man who said she was in childbirth labour and to our shock we saw him rush off to assist in the delivery carrying rusted tools in his hands and this at a time when our country had very good health service."

Ari was convinced. Education must "stop catering to make the human animal a marketable product. It must rather awaken people to be providers of people's needs. Back at school he called for students to give some time for the benefit of the less fortunate. Teenagers responded in great numbers, going out in groups during vacations and weekends to find ways to share knowledge and learn something at the same time.

"It's like the Bible says, "Ari (a Buddhist) is fond of pointing out."To lose yourself is to find your self."

To a limited extent Ari locates his work in the line of the great Indian village reformer who emerged since the days when Gandhi launched his campaigns of nonviolent resistance. He did not know how Gandi did it, but has consulted with leading Gandhian disciples. He was greatly impressed in the late 1950s by Vinoba Bhave who masterminded the voluntary redistribution of an astonishing 1.2 million acres of land to needy Indians.

Some social changes credited to Mr. Ariyaratne seem to echo Gandhian ideals. Upper class Sri Lankans once scorned manual labour. Today that is a thing of the past. in a typical Sarvodaya road building project, for example it is not at all uncommon to see government workers and educated urbanites laboring side by side with rural villagers.

Also gone are the days when strict caste division forbade lower-caste men and women from wearing clothes above the waist and required their children to sit on the floor at school.

And although Sarvodaya draws most of its workers from the primarily Buddhist population of Sri Lanka, Mr. Ariyaratne's ideas have proved sufficiently benevolent to merit participation from Christians, Hindus and Muslims.

Despite the Gandhian similarities, Mr. Ariyaratn's approach has a unique stamp. His formula has been tailor-made to Sri Lanka's welfare state and Buddhist culture drawing on traditional Buddhist ideals of Loving kindness, compassionate action, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. And whereas the Indian village reformers had stressed voluntary sharing of land, Ari has transformed that goal into the sharing of one's time and energy for the benefit of others.

The emphasis shifts from impersonal alms-giving to a respect for the people being helped, he explains, pulling one of many tales out of his story-telling hat to drive home the point.

"A poet was invited by an Indian king to a feast in his honor. But on arriving he was turned away because he was not dressed like a prince. So he came back in prince's clothes just in time for the food to be served. When the king saw that the poet was putting food in his pocket he asked if he had gone crazy. 'Your Majesty' , the poet replied, 'This feast is not in my honor but in the honor of my clothes."

Sarvodaya workers say that Ari frequently compares his movement to a small dog that barks a lot to make sure that the big dog, the government, keeps away.

On the one hand, he has always believed that his social reforms can peacefully coexist and cooperate with government. But as the ranks of his volunteers around the country swelled toward the half-million mark in the 1960s politicians became suspicious and tense - a factor that put to the test the Sarvodaya commitment to nonviolent change.

When local politicians hired notorious Sri Lankan criminals in the early '60s to assassinate Mr. Ariyaratne, he went to the home of the weapon-laden head crook, talked things over with him, gained the man's respect and defused the whole plot.

It wasn't so simple in 1974. The Minister of Justice, Felix Bandaranaike, nephew of then Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike, tried to put controls on Sarvodaya activities. Accusing the Movement of immorality and subversive activities. he sent out notices to heads of government ministries, members of parliment, and the police. Mr. Ariyaratne received the personal backing of the

Prime Minister. but for years the government harassment continued.

"We decided to extend our compassion to the people who were against us" recalls Ari, "We were careful not to have hatred against any of them because you do more damage to yourself that way."

"We easily could have overlooked our principle of staying out of power politics and taken revenge by political action in the upcoming elections. But we didn't do that. And when the new Jayawardene government took office in 1977, the Prime Minister visited us, affirmed that our Movement was a good one; and since then they have actually helped us."

What about civil disobedience?

"If that Justice Minister had been endorsed by other ministers", he says " I would definitely have been forced into nonviolent resistance. Not power- political actions. I would have demonstrated that what they were doing was not true politics but a form of evil. But that would have been a waste of time and energy that could be used in better ways to help people."

Despite the political clashes, large areas of cooperation between the Sri Lankan government and the Sarvodaya Shramadana workers have opened. Sarvodaya peace committees have worked to ease potentially violent social crises. And the Jayaewardene government has asked Ari's staff to teach development orientation courses to senior officials. " I give police officers a more humanitarian orientation." And to help the Minister of Education to upgrade the school in the most poverty stricken areas.

But in the end, can a reform ideal like Sarvodaya Sharamadana survive? How does Mr. Ariyaratne reply the Western economists who argue that Sarvodaya is yearning for an outmoded golden age of village existence that does not face up to modern challenges?

"They would first have to convince me that their own vision is right." He says. "When the physical environment is getting so polluted, when the psychological environment is so ill at ease, when a President can't walk the streets safely without the whole secret service guarding him, when many people are trying to get drugged with chemicals, when the price of packaging and chemical additives in our food cost many times more than the real value of the food we consume, when the level of oil consumption is so high that we know that in a few years greater problems will be experienced, when so many dollars are spent on unnecessary armaments as millions are going hungry- now if you think that the golden era of progress we should be heading for, I think the world has gone mad."

In Arinomics, modernity is not really a question of time but outlook.

"The time has come to look to see whether happiness is really being achieved in proportion to the quantity of meterial goods and power we possess. Real happiness emerges in proportion to the degree to which we learn to share and live joyfully with other people. We have to stop and think before it is too late."

Looking to the future Ari is now contacting similar "sharing" movements worldwide. He commits a quarter of his crowded schedule to talk with groups around the world that are directly or indirectly interested in Sarvodayan - like goals.

There are now Sarvodaya groups working for community development in French Guyana and Thailand, as well as Western countries like Belgium, Holland, Norway, Switzerland and West Germany. A Chinese delegation is also scheduled to spend the month. "As this moment let us do that act, think that thought, say that word that will give the maximum of joy for others, the maximum of sharing what we each have to give for the advance of all." Ari concluded before a Brandeis University audience.

"If a thought comes to your mind that says "I need to get for myself another million dollars", tell that thought, 'thank you very much now get out'. I am still hardly making use of the millions I already have."

MY DEVOTED FRIEND MR. M. A. TILAKARATNE

Mr. M. A. Tilakaratne

During overseas travel, while on the aircraft or inside hotels I make use of the time writing down daily events of importance. But today 2nd September, 1986 I picked up the pen to note down information about a sad event.

Mr. M. A. Tilakaratne, a devoted friend of mine was ill for some time and on the night of 28th August he left us permanently. The last rites were performed at Kanatta on Sunday August 31st. I spoke to him about three weeks back at his residence. When I went to the hospital that evening he was unconscious and was on oxygen. Tilak died at 57 years, continuing his samsaric journey leaving his wife and a 10 year old son.

Mr. M.A. Piyasekera, the then Ambassador for Sri Lanka in Italy, was his brother. Tilak was one of those who pioneered the Kanatholuwa Project, being at that time a Vice President of the Sarvodaya Sangamaya. Dharmasena Senanayake, Kamal Dissanayake, Dharma

Gunasinghe, Tilak and I were continuously together in the Sarvodaya Movement from then until now. On account of this, we all felt a very deep sense of sadness about Tilak's illness and his demise.

Tilak was an Arts Graduate. He completed his M.A. on the thesis "The Vision of Acharya Vinoba Bhave on Education". He would, on many evenings visit me and our conversations would center round the education system prevalent in Sri Lanka. As the Director of Education in charge of Trincomalee District he understood the situation well and was keen to bring about the changes needed. During this period there were many who came to our residence at Delgahayata Gedera, making use of the upper floor for our discussions. Among these were Mr. M. W. Karunananda, Mr. Dharmasena Arampatta, Principal, Prince College, Kotahena and later a senior lecturer at Vidyodaya University and Prof. L. G. Hewage.

Tilak put in such an amount of hard work towards the organization of the Kanatholuwa camp that he fell ill ending up in the Colombo General Hospital. Tilak's participation at almost all the camps we held was a regular feature. More often than not it was the Sarvodaya vision that Tilak spoke of.

It became necessary to remove a few young men from the Sarvodaya Movement. They went to courts. Tilak, suspecting that they would use the opportunity to throw personal insults at me, appeared in the courts on my behalf as the General Secretary of Sarvodaya along with Mr. M.W. Karunananda who was the then President. This act of his brought home to me that Tilak was indeed a true friend (Kalyana Mitta).

In 1967, when the Mahathma Gandhi centenary celebrations were held, presided over by the late Mr. A. Ratnayake, the then President of the Senate, Tilak worked with me shoulder to shoulder as the Joint Secretary.

Tilak's lightheartedness of life was known to a few of us only. Without a trace of a smile, he related hilarious incidents and made us all laugh during long journeys. I remember one such incident.

This is about the late President Abraham Lincoln of U.S.A. Many people who visited President Lincoln belonged to many disciplines; spoke on various subjects with the President one differing from the other. To everyone Lincoln would say, “There is something in what you say.” Mrs. Lincoln could not bear these responses of her husband and one day in desperation she said, “Abraham, You are the President of U.S.A. Why haven't you got the courage to say 'There is nothing in what you say”. President Lincoln listened to his wife patiently and said, “That is true my darling. There is something in what you say also.” I remember many stories of the type which made us roll with laughter.

After his marriage and when he became the Director of Education he had less time to devote for Sarvodaya work. Nevertheless, he continued to be a member of the Executive Council and the Elders' Council until he breathed his last.

May he attain Nirvana.

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MEMORY OF A FRIENDSHIP MY FRIEND STANLEY FERNANDO

Mr. Stanley Fernando (arms folded)

Mr. Stanley Fernando had to leave this world due to Leukemia while yet young. I was away from the country when this happened. The day before he died he had made a request to his wife that I should be one of the pall bearers at his funeral. Until Neetha (my wife) told Stanley's wife about my being away from the country, Stanley's family did not know about it.

I met Stanley in 1959-1960 when we launched the Saukyadana Movement. He was a shy youth, working very hard. He owned a red Skoda car and lived in a palatial mansion “Mithila”, surrounded by a large garden and a swimming pool at Uyana Road, Lunawa, Moratuwa. I spent many weekends at his residence and some of our weekends were spent in Nuwara Eliya, travelling from Moratuwa, Stanley driving his Skoda very fast but carefully. He was one of the witnesses at my marriage the other being Mr. M. W. Karunananda, who was the Principal of Nalanda College. He appeared not interested in marriage and many a time he requested me to convert "Mithila" into a meditation centre. When I left Saukyadana Movement, of which he was the Treasurer, my associations with Stanley too got distanced, without my being even aware of it. Stanley is a relative of Dr. Lakshman Silva. Apart from attending his wedding there was hardly any meeting between us afterwards. He acceded to my request that "Mithila" be made available on lease for Ton de Wilde. Even during this period our meetings were rare.

With the news of Stanley's demise, past memories rushed back to me; shivering with cold, how we climbed Adam's Peak; our work with Saukyadana; times we spent with his brother-in-law Dr. H. C. H. Zoysa at his "Gartmore" estate and our plans to revive Buddhist activities in Sri Lanka.

Stanley was an upright, honest human being, a patriot and a very efficient worker. I am sad that I was not able to be of further service to Stanley and facilitate the services which Stanley could have rendered to his country on account of the Saukyadana Movement taking a different path from Sarvodaya.

May he attain Nirvana.

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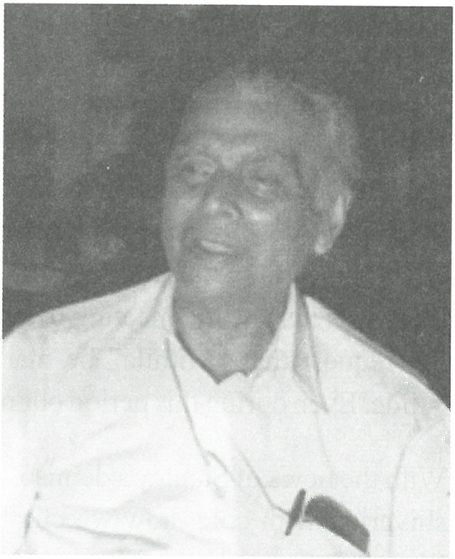
MOTHER NATURE WAS HIS UNIVERSITY



Professor L. G. Hewage

Living in both colonial and independent Sri Lanka and having acquired a wealth of experience not only about the country and its people's but also about the community as a whole, Prof. L. G. Hewage was a man amongst men, a strength to other men, a noble man.

After Sri Lanka gained independence, the Sri Lankans became gradually disheartened and Professor Hewage came forward setting an ideal example in the process of helping people towards rejuvenation, dedicating his life for this cause. He demonstrated through example the values needed for a society to arise in dignity. He was a professor in the educational field. He tried hard to instill into the hearts and minds of the youth the necessity to have a feeling for the nation. He wrote books for people to be knowledgeable and pioneered the cause for world peace through the new organization "World Conference on Religion and Peace" and strove to propagate the Buddhist way of life worldwide. Practicing the Buddhist principles with rectitude, his life was a noble example to the country and the world.

Professor Hewage was born on 29th April 1913, in Dodanduwa a village in Galle District. He was a student of Hegoda Maha Vidyalaya. Later he was an assistant teacher in the same school. He served in several other schools as an assistant teacher and also as head teacher. In 1965 he became a lecturer at Gangodawila Vidyodaya University. It was during this period that he started research on Buddhism to be applied as a way of life and endeavored to spread this concept. His dream was to create an education system based on the Buddhist philosophy.

Having become an active member of the Buddhist Congress and holding many positions within it, he rendered an invaluable service to the Buddhist Cause. Being strongly motivated to put into practice his theoretical views, he joined Sarvodaya in the belief that, it was through Sarvodaya that he could expand his field of work.

Recapitulating the past history of Sarvodaya, the memory of Prof. Hewage remains treasured. He was a true friend who willingly and joyfully served others, and who was a resource person of great value. Although the path along which Sarvodaya worked was difficult to tread, he never tarried but joined in the journey to reach and serve the villagers.

Any place rich in natural beauty was an education centre for Professor Hewage. In his element he converted the temple, the shramadana camp, the shade of a tree to a university lecture hall. There was a deep meaning beyond sharing knowledge. That was the need he felt to establish the simple Buddhist way of life sharing peace and serenity. Being an embodiment in practice of what he preached it is evident that the education system he advocated could be very effective.

In line with Sarvodaya philosophy he strove hard to get the villagers to awaken to their inherent strength lodged within them. He was very keen to let the people know about the role played by the Buddhist monks in this regard. Professor Hewage loved his country, loved his people and loved Sarvodaya. Sarvodaya way of life geared towards the welfare of village communities was a stable ground for him to put into practice the deepest impulses of the benevolent social service worker that he was.

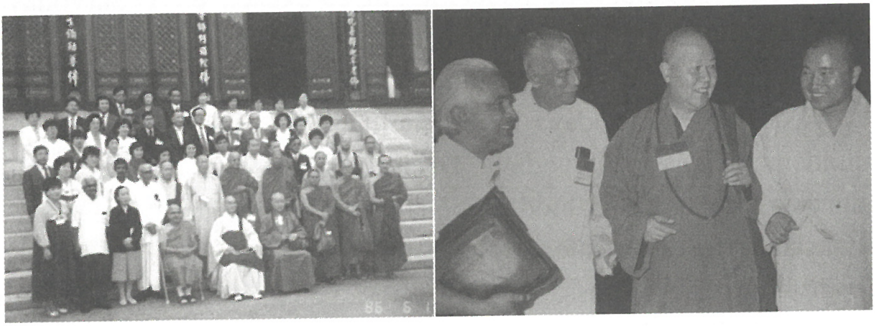
Professor Hewage strongly believed that the mother tongue, the nation and a religious background should be placed on a high pedestal in education. He often mentioned the fact that education without such a foundation would invariably produce men and women with unchanging artificial concepts. With ideas such as these, Professor Hewage was able to make some revolutionary changes in the education field. Numerous articles appeared in the local and international magazines; conferences were enriched by his literary contributions and the books he authored on programmed learning, on educational psychology were the gifts that people received at his hands. *"Ruhune Veeraya"* (The Hero of the South) is just one example of the literary contribution he made to get the young generation on to the right path.

He was a pioneer member of Sarvodaya and it was not the Movement only that benefited from his work, the entire Buddhist world underwent a revival. He was a Vice President and a life member of Sarvodaya until his demise. He took the lead in Buddhist professional and cultural activities and was the Dean of the Education Faculty of Vidyodaya University. He was responsible for producing many renowned educationists for Sri Lanka.

He became a teacher as a teacher of teachers. A distinguished teacher of both education and Buddhist philosophy, his first effort as an author was the publication of the magazine, "Gurukama". It was a trimonthly publication on education started in 1954. Prior to leaving this world he tirelessly worked towards organizing the "World Conference on Education" scheduled to be held in Thailand. He could not participate in it. We felt it as a great loss to the country.

Professor Hewage got married in 1941 and was blessed with three sons. The eldest Mahinda Hewage was at that time an advisor in an Embassy; Sarathchandra Hewage was an engineer in Canada and Gamini Hewage was a teacher in Homagama Primary School. All three sons following the footsteps of their father rendered valuable services.

After a very fruitful life, he left this world at the age of 76 years. With his demise, the education field lost a sage, the educated community lost a free thinker, the youth was robbed of a guide on their path and the readers lost a writer. It is 17 years after we lost him that this piece



World Conference on Peace held in Seoul Korea
(Seated in front Ven. Dr. Vijitha Dhammarakkhita, Chief Incumbent of Kelaniya Temple, myself and Prof. L. G. Hewage in the second row.)

of writing is being produced. He shared his knowledge with the international community, conducted research relating to education in the Asian Region, was a leader of All Ceylon Buddhist Congress, a member of (1) the Executive Committee of UNESCO, (2) Sri Lanka National Education Committee, (3) Sri Lanka Buddhist Congress, (4) Asian Cultural Development Movement, (5) Asian Conference on Religion and Peace and held many more important positions serving the national and international community. Professor Hewage's demise is a sad and a great loss to us.

> Professor L.G. Hewage's analysis of Sarvodaya philosophy in the Sarvodaya Paper is a classic example of his academic prudence.

Visit Us and See

We find here a useful vision relating to education, the persons with unbiased point of view would undoubtedly come to the conclusion that it can provide acceptable solutions to even global economic, social and educational needs facilitating co-existence. As Sarvodaya vision is aimed at the well-being of all, without fear or favour it can be mentioned how the long term and short term activities planned for and carried out by Sarvodaya have benefited the masses. There are no hidden agendas in Sarvodaya. Discussions are held to bring to the surface hidden talents, hidden good that the big, the small, the old, the educated, the uneducated, the poor, the rich, the friend, the foe and everybody else possess, and utilize these qualities to bring joy and contentment to all and sundry. Sarvodaya activities are not aimed at victory or defeat. Persons who are fully aware of its activities know that all its intentions are based on loving kindness and are aimed at finding avenues for the well-being of all. From the beginning to the end and from the end to the beginning, Sarvodaya in totality is one wholesome entity. It is a blessing to this world and the next one too.

Certain visions in the world require colossal amounts of money to be spent (wasted) on weaponry, resorting to revolutionary bloodshed with the hope of bringing in reforms in the social, economic and education sectors. Many persons putting Sarvodaya to ridicule over the slow pace it takes reminds us of the saying of our ancestors. "Haste makes waste." Some persons with the help of foreign anti-Buddhist manipulations have tried to go on the fast track for the past 25 to 30 years, have got the nation backwards 100 years, adopting short-lived haste. Ignoring the wisdom of the ancients, the social, economic and cultural framework imposed on us has plunged the nation to abysmal depths. It is as clear as daylight that Sarvodaya is the answer to development.

Handed down to us from generations in the past and considered as an ancient national heritage of ours, are the Buddhist principles such as the Middle Path, the four wholesome abodes meaning loving kindness, compassionate action, altruistic joy and equanimity. Sarvodaya vision is based on these Buddhist teachings of immense value. Hence, Sarvodaya, without any fear can be introduced as a fitting social order to be followed. Therefore, "Come and See" is most appropriate. During King Dharmashoka's time people were able to follow their faith unhindered as the king respected and gave place of pride to Buddhist doctrine based on the Middle Path.

Same story repeats itself during the time of Mahatma Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave. That is how Sarvodaya became the awakening of all.

A group of people, or a nation whether able or unable to progress, whether they stop half way, whether they complete the journey or not, all of them are blessed with harmonious living and not disrupted living. Sarvodaya vision is an open book. That is the reason why we tell you to "Come and See."

Long live Sarvodaya-A Song composed in Sinhala by the Professor which is very popular:

"Long live Sarvodaya building the nation; seeing an end to wanting,

Using tools of kindness, compassion; rejoicing at others' well-being,

Give-up own happiness, for the joy of others

Long live Sarvodaya, spreading peace; hearts and minds set on common good,

Non-violence in forefront; resisting negative forces of evil

Paying heed to the call of needy; we march forward bringing in hope to the villager-hearts,

Long live Sarvodaya putting a stop to want; help blossom love and joy in all.

Join hands in a friendly link of equality; build the nation with voluntary effort.

For and with everyone around; long live Sarvodaya spreading peace.

Service to all, treading the Middle Path; with no leaning to left or right.

With compassion and equanimity continue the journey

Long live Sarvodaya spreading peace; all in the service for common good.

Prosperity of village and home; from the beginning to the end

Middle included we work for the good of all

Long live Sarvodaya; spreading peace and harmony. May the beauty of the ancient Lanka's,

Virtues surface through Sarvodaya and may all see the truth and may Sarvodaya live long"

(Translator's note - The original Sinhala version by Professor L. G. Hewage is a wonderful piece of verse which the translator tried to capture at least giving the meaning)

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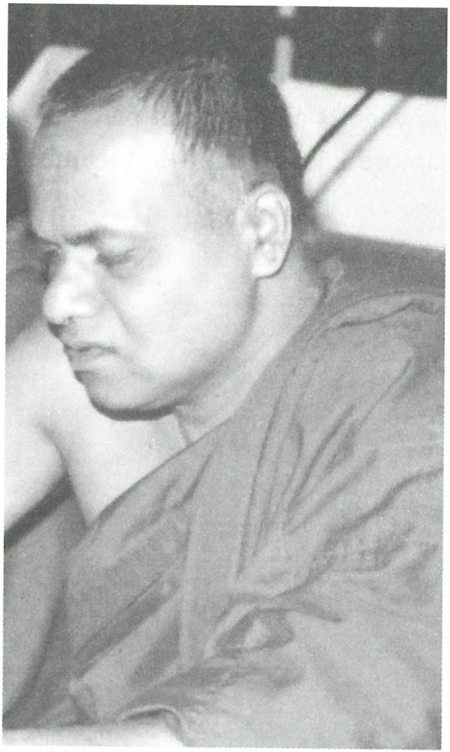
THE MOST REVERED VEN. THUNNANE SUMANATISSA MAHA THERO

Since the time our Movement started, the social services initiated by the Nalanda College Social Service League to alleviate poverty in the poor villages of Sri Lanka showed successful results from the beginning. The number participating in the Shramadana camps progressively increased and the media too, took the message countrywide. Many people wrote to us expressing their willingness to join the Movement. We received the first letter from the Ven. Thunnane Sumanatissa Maha Thero.


Ven. Thunnane Sumanatissa Maha Thero.

The Ven. Monk's temple was located near the 24th mile post on the Colombo Avissawella main road. No sooner we received his letter than we went to meet him. My eyes caught the collection of food items, clothing, kitchen utensils, etc. stocked in the temple. We were told that these items were collected at the request of the Ven. Sumanajothi, the Senior monk of Jayasumanaramaya

Ven. Thunnane Sumanatissa Maha Thero

and his pupil the Ven. Pandit Thunnane Sumanatissa Thero with the help of other monks in the temple, to be distributed among the poor people. These were gifted by the compassionate lay people attached to the temple. The Ven. Senior monk asked us to take these items and distribute them among the people. But I made a request that it would be more appropriate if these items were distributed by the persons who collected them, participating in one of our Shramadana camps. The result was the participation of a group headed by the Ven. Thunnane Nayaka Thero in one of our Shramadana camps.

The Ven. Sumanatissa Thero, with the help of Sarvodaya, identified villages where there were no Buddhist monks and got young boys ordained and provided them with the required education. By 1974 there was a Bhikkhu Training Institute at Thunnane Jayasumanaramaya and another Bhikkhu Training Institute inaugurated in 1982 at Avissawella in memory of the Ven. Pandit

Henpitagedera Gnanasiha Thero; both institutes were established with the help of Sarvodaya, by the Ven. Thunnane Sumanatissa Nayaka Thero. He was an embodiment of virtue whom all of us look up to. Probably due to a past bad karma he was afflicted with a serious illness which took his life before he could reach 64 years. To his credit are 42 years of service as a monk for the benefit of humanity.

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Ven. Sumanatissa's Funeral Pyre

In December 1985 I left Sri Lanka with the hope of spending a considerable period visiting many countries. While I was abroad news reached me about two very sad events. One was the death of Ven. Thunnane Nayaka Thero and the other was the demise of Stanley Fernando who was a witness for my wedding.

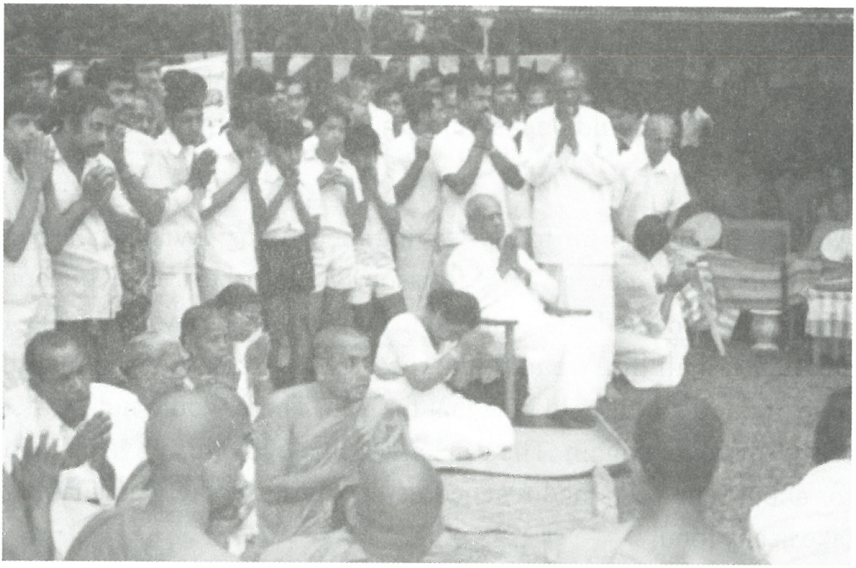
Among the Ven. Bhikkhus who dedicated their lives for Sarvodaya the Ven. Thunnane Thero occupies an unmatched place. The name of the Ven. Thero should be inscribed in golden letters in the history of Sarvodaya.

About three days prior to my leaving the country I visited the Ven. Thero. Neetha, Jeevan, Mrs. Rajasooriya and the Ven. Kondanna Thero accompanied me. Although the Ven. Thero was unable to comprehend all that we told him, he was fully conscious and at the time of our departure, I knew that the Ven. Thero would not be there for us to see him again. The cancer which ate into his physical body for about four years had reached its deadliest that he was unable to take in any food.

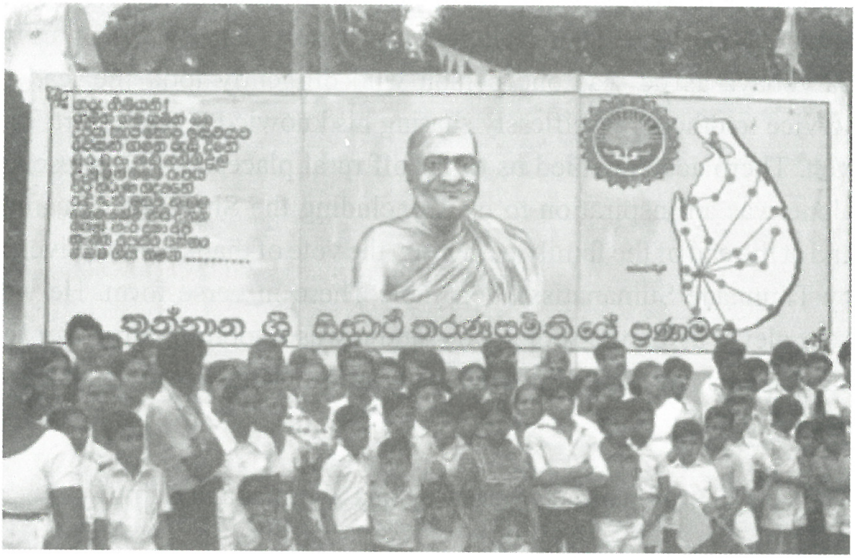
When the Ven. Thero preached the Dhamma, it was like the ringing of a silver bell. His sermons were very clear, pleasant and were of quality. The Ven. Thero's demise is greatly felt by all of us in Sarvodaya as he was one person who diligently took the lead in service to others by selflessly sharing his knowledge and effort. The Ven. Thero accompanied us to far off rural places and his presence alone was an inspiration to us. Concluding the Shramadana camps and at the end of the family gathering, the vote of thanks was delivered by Thunnane Sumanatissa Venarable Thero in verse form. He was very clever at 'on the spot poetry' and it was a soothing drink for the participants of the Shramadana camps, who were physically exhausted.

The Ven. Thero's words at the Pallegama Shramadana Camp -

“In this hamlet with no previous footsteps of mine I spent a wonderful



The Venerable Maha Sangha observing the religious customs with Mr. M. W. Karunanda, Mr. William Kandage and Neetha participating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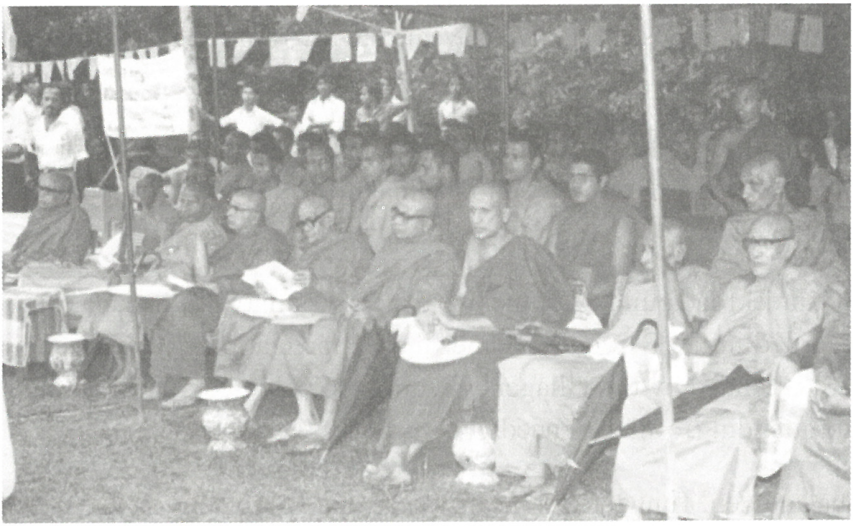
Some Members of the community who attended the cremation ceremony



Some members of the Maha Sangha who attended the cremation ceremony

Participants in the cremation ceremony including members of the Maha Sangha time when purpose of life was revealed to me - Sarvodaya, the path to follow.

"Strength of unity, clarity of purpose combined with sweat for two days are no match compared to the magnificent view of the roadway completed."

Volunteer road builders of the two day Pallegama Shramadana camp, recorded in the Sarvodaya Paper their appreciation of the love and care extended by the villagers, feeding the volunteers day and night and attending to all their needs.

The late Ven. Tunnane Sumanatissa Nayaka Thero delivered a speech at the Shramadana Camp held from April 21 to 26, 1968 in the village of Dikyaya in Badulla District. A part of his speech which is in verse form is given below.

Most venerated monks, ladies and gentlemen
These lines are dedicated to you in this Family Gathering.
Every participant of this camp spent a meaningful week
Fulfilling the needs of the village through selfless service
A lesson well-learnt from Sarvodaya
Spreading so fast that brings joy and contentment.

Ashram and temple in the village named Dikoya
Are precious as the two eyes
Our love for all is the gift
We bestow before we depart

May the fruits of Sarvodaya vision spread to every corner
May all beings be filled with kindness in thought, word and deed
May the roots of hatred and divisive feelings be annihilated
May the lives of all beings be filled with joy, peace and harmony.

(Translator's note - The original poem in Sinhala contained poetic beauty which is not found in the translation that gives only the meaning)

THE SAGE WHO VEHEMENTLY OPPOSED UNWHOLESOME ACTIVITIES AND SHOWED THE NOBLE PATH

THE VEN. GANEGAMA SARANANKARA THERO

Ven. Ganegama Saranankara Thero

Thousands who gathered at a meeting in Galle witnessed tears pouring down the eyes of the Ven. Ganegama Thero, unable to bear the sorrow when he spoke of the predicament that our country has been plunged into.

The Sambuddha Sasana (Buddhist Order) will exist worldwide so long as there are learned, disciplined Buddhist monks. From this perspective, the most Ven. Rajakeeya Panditha Ganegama Saranan kara Thero, the Senior Sangha Nayaka of the Galu Korale (A Division of the Galle District); the Chief Incumbent of the Baddegama Hedidemalakanda Ancient Temple was a monk who excelled in virtue, excelled in wisdom and excelled in morality. He was a Buddha *Puthra* (A Buddhist Monk) who rendered invaluable service to the community by being a teacher in the field of education and in matters connected with Dhamma. Through his writings he spoke to the nation and the books on Dhamma he wrote are a gift. To seek justice guided by untarnished truth he fearlessly marched forward for the benefit of the community. He was interested in the welfare of the people in the village he was born in and was a guiding light to the people who followed his footsteps.

The Ven. Thero was born in Baddegama in 1908 and entered the Order of Buddhist Monks in 1924. He received his primary education at Ananda Pirivena in Kithulampitiya, Galle and entered Maligakanda Vidyodaya Pirivena where he successfully completed the degree course. He received his higher ordination on 11th June, 1932 at Malwatte Temple, Kandy; completed the Pirivena education while yet young; learnt English at Pembroke Institute, Colombo; proceeded to India and entered the University of Culcutta from where he obtained the Masters Degree; and entered Rabindranath Tagore University spending five years there. During this period he was able to reach a very high level of erudition in languages.

Monks and lay people who were his students at Vidyodaya University of Sri Lanka still talk with respect of his humble ways.

In 1963 October, to begin the first session in the University, the Ven. Ganegama Thero was listed to deliver the inaugural lecture in Buddhist Culture at the Bandaranaike Hall. The students ever ready to hoot at anytime, started their hooting when the Ven. Thero took the microphone. For about two minutes the hooting continued, but it was not the Ven. Thero who got angry or spoke one word. He removed his spectacles and asked the students in a very high pitch, “Have you finished your hooting?" There was absolute silence.

"Those who hooted at me are Sinhala children, sons and daughters of fine mothers and fathers. Those of you gentlemen who hooted at me came here, some carrying their shoes on their shoulders while the others came crawling through the gate. None of these things happened to me." Saying so, the Ven. Thero began his lecture. The eyes of most of the children were filled with tears. Language appropriately used was able to get the attention of the students.

with Ven. Ganegama Saranankara Thero

Ven. Ganegama Saranankara Thero has rendered priceless service to Sarvodaya, in being an advisor, a counsellor and a patron in the noble work of helping to raise the living standards of the villagers. He joined us to serve people in far off rural places and was not keen to have his midday meal in a temple. He was agreeable to sit under a tree and have his midday meal as he considered service to humanity more important than consuming a meal.

Ven. Saranankara Thero believed in Mahatma Gandhi's way of thinking. He went to villages and spoke to them and understood their feelings, their hopes and aspirations. He vehemently believed on what was meant by social justice, that included all round development of society and he respected this ideal concept. Personnel attached to the Sarvodaya Village Development and Social Services field looked up to the Ven. Thero for guidance. Hand in glove with me the Ven. Thero engaged himself in social service activities mainly aimed at the well-being of the rural masses. With the demise of the Ven. Thero there is a vacuum created in the strength, the steering and the guiding factors of our Movement.

Memory is still fresh in me of the first day I met the Ven. Thero. This was the day the road between Ginimellagaha and Ganegama was built. Mr. Albert Edirisinghe was with me joining the Shramadana. This same day I came to know the Ven. Thero and this was the day he joined Sarvodaya. Honouring the decision he made on that day, he

Addressing the Shramadana camp at Ginimellagaha

continued his dedicated services with Sarvodaya and he was a tower of strength to us. He was not a Communist; nor did he endorse Communist principles.

All that was necessary to make a temple a true place of worship for Buddhists was found at Hedidemalakanda ancient temple in Baddegama, his village. This was possible through his efforts. He drew strength from the character of King Dutugemunu, a hero, respected by the nation even today. He made artists use their brush to display pictures of King Dutugemunu. Statues of King Dutugemunu, his mother Queen Viharamaha Devi and the ten giants make us return to history with pride.

His wish was that in every one of us there should be a Dutugemunu. The reason is not to fight but to uphold within us the quality of love for the nation as it is dwindling away fast. The Ven. Thero always acted appropriately and was a living example of bravery, love for the nation and was keen on protecting the Sinhala race. After returning to Sri Lanka from Rabindranath Tagore University, the Ven. Saranankara Thero was a lecturer at the Parama Dhammachethiya Pirivena where he taught Buddha Dhamma to young Buddhist monks. His teachings embodied a special feature, service to humanity. This great Buddha Putra was never found to be keen on praise, gain, position or acceptance.

He shed tears when receiving news about violence and tirelessly worked towards achieving national unity and promoting co-operative effort. He tried to bring the Tamil youth groups in the north to tread the path of peace. He rejected in totality any hateful speech or thought against the Tamil race. He valued honesty and nonviolence and his character mirrored the Sarvodaya way of simple lifestyle, the cultural heritage of the nation.

Sri Lanka benefited immensely through his writings. While studying in Bharatha he wrote a series of articles which were considered very useful, titled "Janaranjana", to "Dinamina", a daily newspaper in Sri Lanka. Concluding his studies he returned to Sri Lanka to start serving the country. He was respected by the Buddhist readership that looked forward to read his books. "*Ananda Hamuduruwo" (*Buddhist monk Ananda), "Dutugemunu *Rajjuruwo"* (King Dutugemunu), "Yasodarava" (Princess Yasodara), "Anagarika Dharmapala", Father of the nation, are very popular books by the Ven. Monk. There is a special saying in his book "King Dutugemunu". "Do not ever hate the Tamil race. If it happens so, then great dishonour would be brought upon the author."

He donated books to the rural students in the Galle District and introduced the mobile library system by stocking books in a cart and distributing them travelling from place to place. In recognition of this noble deed the Malwatu Maha Nikaya (the main Order of Buddhist Monks in the country) bestowed on him the title of *Galu Korale Maha Sangha Nayaka* (Senior Buddhist Monk of the Galle Koralaya.)

After serving the country in many ways the Ven. Ganegama Thero left the physical body on 29th December, 1989. The vacuum created by the demise of the Ven. Thero who was a guiding light and a fitting leader to all Sarvodaya workers in Galle District cannot be filled. It was a sad event the impact of which was felt by everyone in the area. He joined hands with his followers to protect their rights. In order to prevent the functioning of a liquor shop, a group of Buddhist monks led by the Ven. Thero walked the streets of Baddegama chanting the Sutra on loving kindness. In his presence, personnel attached to armed forces bent their heads in reverence. The intervention of Ven. Saranankara Thero who armed himself with pure intentions was the reason for the closure of the liquor shop.

I received the sad news of the passing away of Ven. Saranankara Thero from Janaka while I was in Welimada. That instant we concluded the meeting and headed to Anuradhapura, met Ven. Amithagaveshi who had come to meditate near the Sri Maha Bodhiya, had dinner at the District Centre, Anuradhapura, slept for about two hours and around 2am left to Colombo.

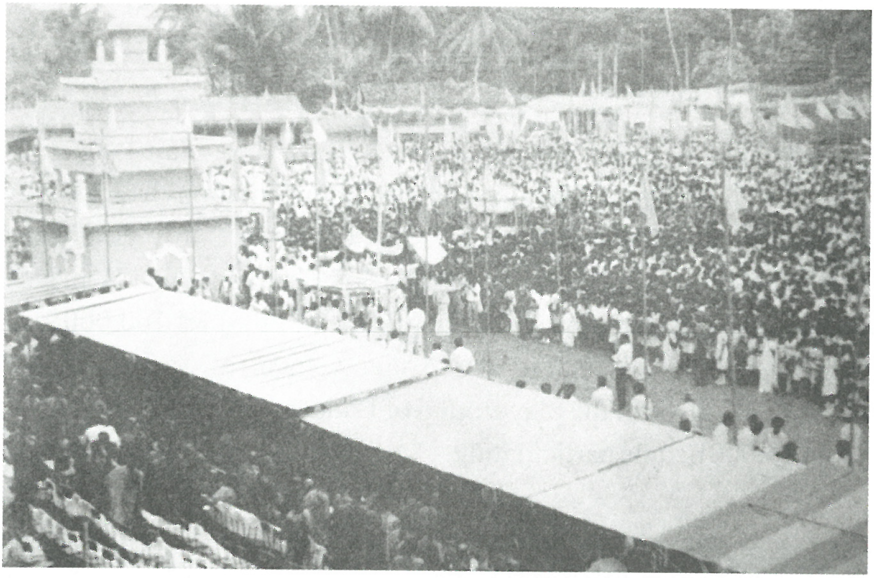
At the Anuradhapura-Kurunegala junction I saw a jeep carrying two men, dumped inside like animals.

At 5.20 am we went to the Maligakanda Pirivena Temple. Neetha, (my wife) Minister of Culture Mr. A. J. Ranasinghe, Mnister of Buddha Sasana; Mr. Lal Gamage, Mr. Albert Edirisinghe and Ven. Sumana and Ven. Samitha, the pupils of the Ven. Saranankara Thero were at the temple. That night Shanthi Sena (Peace Brigade) brothers kept awake and waited with the body of the Ven. Thero. After paying my last respects to the physical body of the Ven. Thero I returned home.

About 6.30 am the funeral procession of vehicles was seen along the beautifully decorated Rawatawatte Road. But Baddegama Samitha Thero, prevented the people from taking the body into the Sarvodaya premises. Viewing this action compassionately, I arranged for Sarvodaya personnel to pay their last respects while the body was still inside the hearse and made arrangements for the procession of vehicles to proceed.

I went to Baddegama to participate for the funeral committee meeting scheduled for 2pm. Baddegama and roadside decorations were seen at Sarvodaya places only. Funeral arrangements were very efficiently handled by the Ven. Athuraliye Indraratane Thero and Ven. Hemasiri Thero. I gave permission to Harsha to spend up to Rs 100,000/- as funeral expenses. With the active involvement of Sarvodaya the funeral took place in the playground of Baddegama Maha Vidyalaya, about 10,000 people participating.

Ven. Saranankara Nayaka Thero's Funeral Procession



Ven. Saranankara Nayaka Thero's
Funeral Procession

A beautiful photograph of the prelate was printed and made available by the Vishva Lekha Press which was distributed on this occasion carrying a verse which came to my mind on hearing of his demise.

The face full of merit is a mirror of virtue.
The wise Head is the heart of the country.
The active hand is the fountain of the Dhamma.
The Venerable who has gone to heaven, even the remembrance is an inspiration.

The Venerable Monk was not only an inspiration to Sarvodaya while living but even in death.

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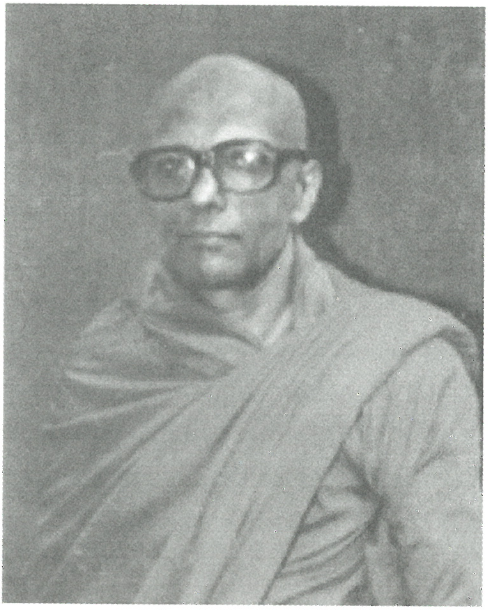
THE VEN. KIRIMETIYAWE PANNASAGARA NAYAKA THERO AN INFLUENTIAL SARVODAYA WORKER

It was November 1986 and I was getting ready to attend a number of Sarvodaya meetings in Japan. The Ven. Pandit Kirimetiyawe Pannasagara Thero visited me with a face lit up with a broad smile and announced, "Sir, I am leaving to Indonesia with a few of my fellow monks to attend a Conference of Buddhist Monks. At the conclusion of the Conference I intend staying a few days in Indonesia and paying homage to the Boro Budur Temple and other places of worship. In the meantime it is my wish to render some service towards propagation of Dhamma in Indonesia where there are more Buddhists than in Sri Lanka." My immediate response was, "Please stop these journeys. It is only a little while ago that you returned to Sri Lanka after a tour of Europe and America. This is the time that all of us should be in Sri Lanka. Violence is escalating from all directions. I will proceed to Japan and return soon after the Conference."

Although I spoke to him thus, I could see that the Ven. Thero was keen to go on this journey more than ever before. He said, "There are two coloured photographs that Bandula Malli took, one to be sent to the Temple and the other to be kept here.Who knows of one's own destiny? I might not be able to visit Sarvodaya again." Smiling the Ven. Thero walked out.

When I telephoned home from Japan, I was told of a radio message that a Buddhist monk had met with an accident in Indonesia and that he had expired. They were awaiting further news. I was contemplating whether to accept or not, an invitation from Dr. Jim Grant for me to address an international conference in Indonesia. I informed my friend Mr. W.P.R.B. Wickremasinghe, the Acting Ambassador to Indonesia and immediately left to Indonesia. At the airport itself Mr. Wickremasinghe explained in detail about the accident that killed the Ven. Thero and how the dead body was flown to Sri Lanka with the help of the Foreign Ministry officials and the Indonesian officials in authority. He also further described that in Sri Lanka, with the support of the government and Sarvodaya and with the assistance of the late Ven. Thero's senior student the Ven. Egodamulle Amaramoli Thero the funeral rites were performed with the utmost respect.



Ven. Kirimetiyawe Pannasagara Nayaka Thero

All these events took place within one week.

I came to know the Ven. Kirimetiyawe Pannasagara Thero in the 1960's. It was an unexpected meeting. My family members were in the habit of loading the jeep 5 Sri 1106 with mats and pillows to sleep and food parcels to last the journey. Equipped thus, myself driving the jeep, with Neetha, and my daughter and some youth from Sarvodaya we left Moratuwa.

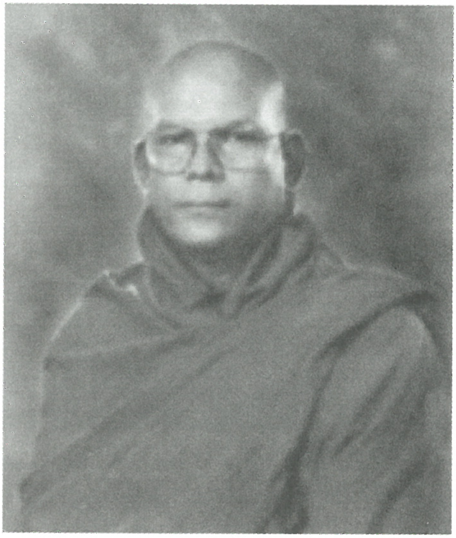
While travelling along the Kurunegala - Keppetipola Road, we stopped near a small Buddhist Temple (Awasa) at the foot of Rambadagalla Rock to have lunch, when destiny decided that we meet the Ven. Pannasagara Thero. As he had already heard about Sarvodaya it did not take us much time to get ourselves closely acquainted with the Ven. Thero.

Our First Jeep Which Enabled me To Travel To Every Remote Village In The Country

Before long the Ven. Thero visited our home in Moratuwa. From then onwards he did not miss a single Shramadana camp. He participated in Sarvodaya meetings and invariably encouraged the participants by delivering a sermon. In association with Buddhist monks, like the Ven. Henpitagedera Gnanasiha Thero, the Ven. Tunnane Sumanatissa Thero, the Ven. Ganegama Saranankara Thero and the Ven. Nedalagamuwa Jinananda Thero, fatherly patrons who gave leadership to Sarvodaya activities, the Ven. Kirimetiyawe Pannasagara Thero became a Sarvodaya stalwart and offered his share in the service to humanity.

The Ven. Kirimetiyawe Pannasagara Thero was born on 12th February, 1948 in the Kirimetiyawa village, in the Matale District. He received Higher Ordination on 14th July, 1953, which year marked the beginning of his service in the name of Buddha Sasana. This had to end on 26th November 1986, in a street named Martha Dinatha, Anwal, Jakarta, Indonesia, to everyone's shock and grief.

The Mayura Sumithra Dharma Vidyalaya in Moneragala Temple, which achieved the prestigious position of the Best Dhamma School in the Island at one time, is one of the noble services that Ven. Thero offered the Buddha Sasana being the Founder of this Dhamma School, in 1953. In 1966 he began the Vidyasagara Pirivena. From the time of his



Ven. Egodamulle Amaramol Mahanayaka Thero

association with Sarvodaya, in his efforts to spread the Sarvodaya vision, he established the Sarvodaya Divisional Centre in his temple and extended his services to Yapahuwa, Mawathagama, Hiriyala, Kurunegala and Dodamgaslanda where roads were built, irrigation systems introduced, homes built and preschools established. He was an active member of the Sarvodaya Executive Council, member of the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress and Maha Bodhi Society.

The Ven. Thero's demise is a great loss to Sarvodaya and an irreparable personal loss to me.

The Ven. Thero associated himself with Swami Premananda of Matale and was a participant in the Peace walk conducted in December 1983.

To fill the vacuum created by the demise of the Ven. Kirimetiyawe Pannasagara Thero, the Ven. Egodamulle Amaramoli Thero has joined Sarvodaya and functions as an Executive Council Member, which is a comforting factor for all of us at Sarvodaya.

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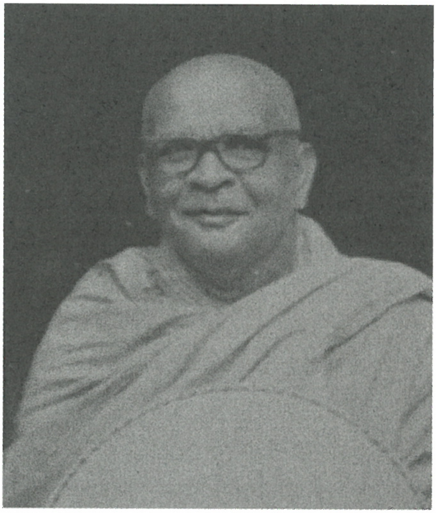
OUR LEARNED NAYAKE THERO THE MOST VENERABLE PANDIT NEDALAGAMUWE JINANANDA

The Sath (seven) Korale, from ancient times, was the motherland of revered Buddhist monks who illumined the nation. I am fortunate to have been blessed with the association of the Most Venerable Pandit Nedalagamuwe Jinananda Nayake Thero who, having been born in the village of Nedalagamuwa, in the Katugampola Hatpattuwa in the Sath Korale, illuminated the Sath Korale and the country through education and community service, from his village. Everyone addressed him as "Our Pandit Thero."

Belonging to a distinguished lineage in Nedalagamuwa, he was born on 4th May 1919 to Hapuarachchige Laisohamy, the mother and Daniel Appuhamy, the father. He started his education at Nedalagamuwa Government School and passed the S.S.C. examination.


Venerable Pandit Nedalagamuwe Jinananda

As a student of the Most Ven. Yatigama Gnanukkanssa Maha Nayake Thero, the founder of Nedalagamuwa Dharmaraja Pirivena and the Head of Sri Lanka Ramanya Nikaya of North Western Province, he was ordained as a Buddhist monk on 4th November 1934. On 5th May, 1940 the Ven. Thero received Upasampada (Higher Ordination) and in 1944, he passed the 1st stage of Oriental Languages with distinctions in all three languages and received many prizes. In 1954 the Ven. Thero completed the final examination in Oriental Languages and qualified himself as a Pandit. After serving as a teacher at the Nedalagamuwa Dharmaraja Pirivena, the Ven. Thero became its Principal and served in this capacity for 30 years. Our Pandit Thero was responsible for the praise-worthy position achieved by the Dharmaraja Pirivena which was successful in producing many intellectuals, to benefit the community. I came to know of Our Pandit Thero in 1965 and the revered name is inscribed in golden letters in the history of Sarvodaya.

Mr. Jayawickrema Perera is a Nalandian who participated in the 1st Shramadana Camp in Hettipola, Kanatoluwa in Kurunegala District. He was one of the pioneers who were instrumental in developing the undeveloped villages such as Giriulla, Katugampola and Pannala through Shramadana work. Later he joined the political arena and served the country well as a Member of Parliament, Minister and Chief Minister. Even today he is a politician.

Mr. Jayawickrema Perera, along with Mr. Sinha Perera, another benevolent person of Nedalagamuwa conducted Shramadana Camps to develop the area in and around Nedalagamuwa, under the guidance and advice of our Pandit Thero. Our Pandit Thero actively engaged himself in Sarvodaya activities providing advice and guidance. Mr. Sinha Perera left us for good while still young; but his wife Mrs. Laxmi Perera renders valuable service to Nedalagamuwa, also actively participating in Sarvodaya programmes.

Our Pandit Thero always carried a smile on his face. Soft spoken and of serene personality, the Ven. Thero won the hearts of people quite easily. He was well disciplined, simple, unassuming and virtuous to the letter, adhering to the Buddhist principles. The public clamoured to listen to his sermons, for his manner of delivering Dhamma talks was akin to what is contained in Saddharmaratnavaliya authored by Ven. Dharmasena Thero in the Dambadeniya era. Ven. Thero's generosity is indeed a Paramita (one of the ten perfections cultivated by aspirants to enlightenment) practiced throughout Samsara.

Services the Ven. Thero rendered as an elder of the Executive Council of Sarvodaya are beyond words. Unfailingly, Our Pandit Thero would attend monthly meetings of the Sarvodaya Executive Council. In 1977 The Ven. Thero represented Sarvodaya at a conference in West Germany and the experience the Ven. Thero received was put into practice for the benefit of people in Nedalagamuwa and surrounding villages through Sarvodya Shramadana Societies, Village Development Societies, Death Benefit Societies and Dharma Schools. In 1969 an international conference was held at Nedalagamuwa Dharmaraja Pirivena with Shri Jayaprakash Narayan as the Chief Guest. The then Indian High Commissioner H.E Dr. Bhimsen Sachar and well known Indian Sarvodaya leaders such as Shri Devendra Kumar Gupta, Mr. Radakrishnan and Mudliyar K. Sinnathamby from Jaffna were the other distinguished guests. A large gathering participated in this event.

Appropriate direction, advice and guidance readily available to the people from him are preciously stamped in their memory. Bowing to the transience of human life the Most Ven. Pandit Nedalagamnuwe Jinananda Nayake Thero breathed his last on 16th July 1988 at 6.10 a.m, at a time when the country needed his services the most.

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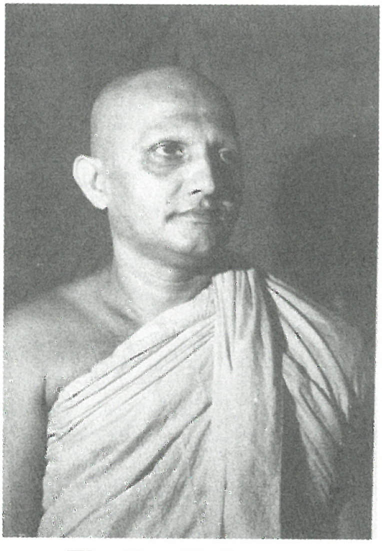
THE VEN. YATIPAWWE RATHANASARA NAYAKE THERO DEDICATED TO A WORLD-WIDE BUDDHIST SERVICE

I came in contact with the late Ven. Yatipawwe Rathanasara Nayaka Thero in 1970. With the shifting of the Sarvodaya Headquarters to a site in Rawatawatta, Moratuwa, adjoining the Ancient Palliyagodalla Temple, the Chief Monk of the temple, the Ven. Ratanasara Thero became one of those elderly monks who earned my great respect. The last time, I was able to speak to him was, while he was warded in the General Hospital, Colombo, 24 hours before Ven. Thero passed away. His request was, "Carry forward your work."



The Ven. Yatipawwe Rathanasara Nayaka Thero

He lived for and worked towards the steady continuance of the Buddha Sasana. Disregarding the necessity to maintain the physical body in good health he tirelessly strove to maintain the ancient Buddhist traditions through the Palliyagodella Temple thus contributing in great measure to uphold and maintain the simple but wholesome Buddhist way of life.

The densely populated Moratuwa area can easily be prey to urban influences. I watched with interest over a very long period, how the late Ven. Thero got the children and the youth, living in such an environment to tread the right path in accordance with Buddhist culture. What is expected of a Nayaka Thero of a temple in directing and guiding the people was found in no small measure in the Ven. Rathanasara Nayaka Thero. This was a gift to the families living in the area.

During an era when lay people and clergy are easily drawn into various political conflicts, the Ven. Nayaka Thero, a dignified religious personality, maintained the purity of a Buddhist place of worship in Palliyagodalle ancient temple where people gathered in unison to worship.

It was the Palliyagodella Temple, under the guidance and leadership of the Ven. Rathanasara Nayaka Thero, which made all arrangements to provide the necessary requirements of Bhikkhus (Buddhist monks), when they visited 'Damsak Mandira' in thousands. The Palliyagodella Temple was a great strength to the Sarvodaya Movement.

The Ven. Nayaka Thero would deliver sermons fitting the occasion; perform all religious activities in harmony with the ancient Buddhist traditions; give an exemplary leadership to the young monks and was an embodiment of virtue, expected of a Nayaka Thero in a temple. He was a well respected elderly Nayaka Thero, an example for the present generation of Buddhist monks. For 51 years he led a life full of Dhamma virtues and left us on June 2nd 1983. A grateful group of his followers participated in the elaborately arranged funeral service. I was the Chairman of the Committee that was responsible for the funeral arrangements.

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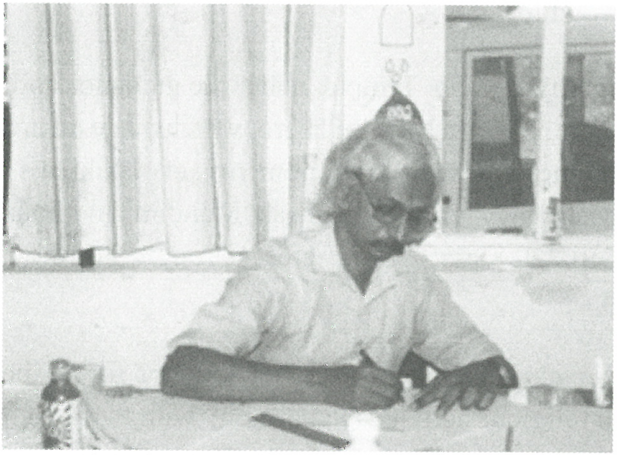
I AM RIGHT..........IT IS WRONG

Pemsiri de Silva *Malli* (younger brother) joined Sarvodaya in around 1978. Mr. D. S. Liyanage, a member of the Executive Council received Pemsiri. Vincent Sirisena Malli of the photography section was requested to train him in photography. I got him to accompany me in tours to far off villages and I am producing the following part of a diary entry he had made. This was sent to me after he read the first volume of Bhava Thanha.



Pemsiri de Silva

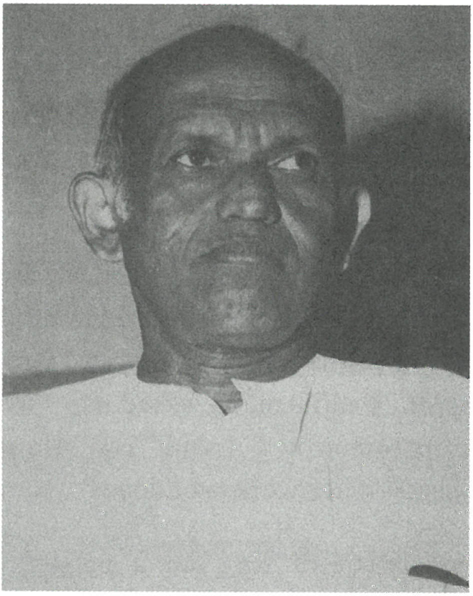
"Mr. D. S. Liyanage, Secretary of Sarvodaya Movement took me to Sarvodaya today. He is a pleasant person, bit on the taciturn side. Always with a smiling face he is ever ready to help people. He has very kindly helped me personally. Although I cannot remember the exact dates, of my going to Sarvodaya, you Sir, was not in the country. Mr. Karunananda was the President then.

After introducing me to Sirisena *Aiya* (elder brother) the next person I was introduced to was Loku Balasuriya Aiya. He was very kind to me and asked me a few questions and told me to work until Sir returned to Sri Lanka. At that time it was Loku Balasuriya Aiya and Kiriwandeniya Aiya who took leadership in many of the Sarvodaya activities. Shelton and Harsha Aiya were prominent youth at that time.

Vincent Aiya showed me the Dark Room and the equipment. It was a very small room. I was asked to produce three photographs from the Negatives he gave me. I printed three photographs and Vincent Aiya scrutinized them. He asked me, "Were you asked to report for duty from tomorrow?" I said "Yes." He said, "Then come early morning there is much work to be done."

Vincent Aiya was not a person who loved much talk. Saliya Samarawickrema was his good friend. Later on I came to know that Vincent was introduced to Sarvodaya by Saliya. The first three prints of the photograph I produced were of Mr. Karunananda's mother.

Although it was one month after I joined Sarvodaya I was not paid any allowance. I had my lunch free. I came to work very early and was in the habit of having my breakfast from Sarvodaya. All of us had our meals seated in the middle of the hall where Family Gatherings were held. Although this was an unusual practice I liked it. Mr. Wijesekera was in charge of preparing meals and looking after the visitors. Cooking was done by Ukku Banda Aiya, Albert Aiya and Sumana *Akka* (Elder sister). Albert Aiya's village is Bundala. Ukku Banda Aiya is from Rambukkana. Sumana Akka comes from Melsiripura. It was a pleasant surprise for me to see people from different parts of the country living as members of one family. After lunch the place is cleaned and the Family Gathering is held. At the beginning I did not participate in the Family Gatherings. It was Shelton Aiya who searched all over Meth Medura to get the ones who did not want to attend the Family Gatherings and make them participate.


Mr. Wijesekera

Mr. Wijesekera who provided us meals was a retired Headmaster of a Sinhala School and a bachelor, a very kind man.

According to my recollection, it was October 5th 1978. I went to work early morning. Mr. Wijesekera had fallen ill suddenly and was admitted to hospital. Edgar Fernando gave me the details according to which it was suspected that Mr. Wijesekera's condition was not good. I can never remember a day that Mr. Wijesekera was angry. He was in the habit of enjoying a vanilla cigar. He lived in a house next to Meth Medura. Mr. Edgar Fernando after retirement worked at Sarvodaya as a clerk. (Although a clerk by designation he was involved in many activities connected with the Movement). That day was a melancholic one for Sarvodaya. I returned home in the evening.

About 10.30 in the night someone tapped on the door. When opening the door I saw Karu Aiya, Nimal and Kulasiri Malli. As I saw them I enquired about Mr. Wijesekera. They kept silent. Indrani also joined us and told Karu Aiya to take a seat.

'No, *Nangi* (Younger sister) we came to offer a Bodhi Pooja for Mr. Wijesekera, but at 8.45 p.m he was no longer with us'.

I controlled myself with the greatest difficulty. Indrani cried. Karu Aiya said, “Nangi, Sir wanted Pemsiri Malli to accompany us to Sarvodaya'.

I went to Sarvodaya with them. Sir was in a very sad mood, in great pain of mind. I have not seen tears in his eyes until that moment. His eyes were red, filled with tears. Words would not come to his mouth. In a very sorrowful manner he asked me whether it was possible for me to get a picture of Mr. Wijesekera. I cannot explain my feelings when I heard this request from Sir. He tried to teach us a lesson even at a moment of this nature. Getting the picture was most essential. The kindly and humble manner it was requested cannot be expected of a person holding a position that Sir held.

That instant I got a few pictures of Mr. Wijesekera. It was after midnight.

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On any other day, at an hour like this Mr. Wijesekera would ask '*Mallay*, (affectionate form for younger brother) shall we have a little tea? Mr Wijesekera is silent today. What is life? Entire Meth Medura was a sad sight. What is life? People who die-are they the persons who should die? Whatever the time in the night one goes to Meth

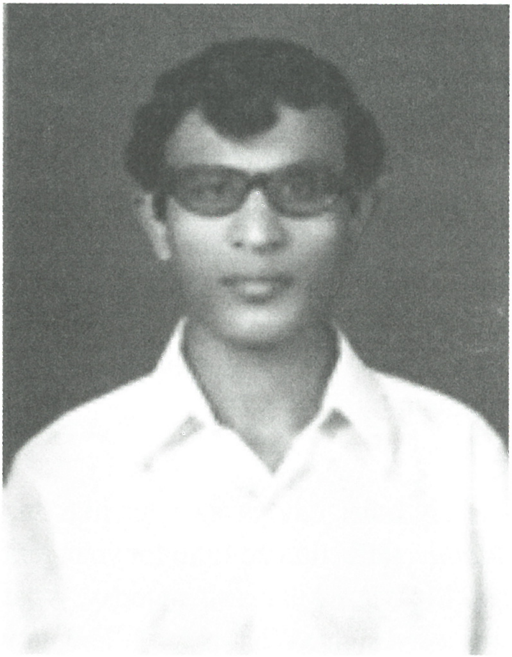
Medura, one finds Mr. Wijesekera awake. There was no time hence he slept. He slept when he was inside the vehicle travelling to make purchases. Such was his dedication. The end of such a kind gentleman is our misfortune indeed.

Although it was one person missing the gap is felt by us in a big way.

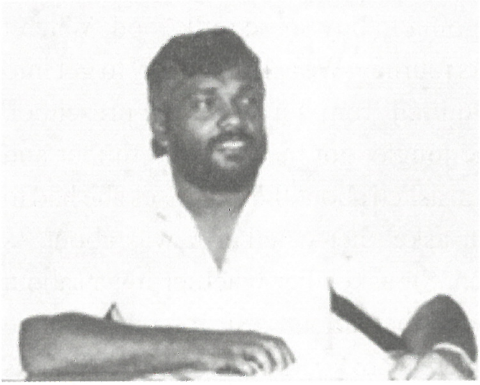
At the early morning Family Gathering Sir spoke. 'I did not cry when I lost my father. But I cried much at Mr. Wijesekera's death. His demise is a great loss to all of us at Sarvodaya and Sarvodaya itself. There isn't another person in entire Sarvodaya who fed people the way Mr. Wijesekera did. We have to give him the highest honour. He does not need our merit. He was full of merit himself'.

These are the words of Sir that I wrote down. Sir spoke in a voice full of sorrow.

Even Neethakka was concerned about Loku Sir. Owing to this situation we decided to leave the Sarvodaya Moratuwa environment for a few days. We got ready to leave for Ampara, Sir, Vinya Malli, Karu Aiya and myself. There was absolute silence inside the vehicle.



Sisira Malli



Harsha Kumara Navaratne

We met Sisira Malli who was in charge of Kandy Panwila Centre. He too joined with us. Sir enquired from Sisira why he was not there at the Conference. As Sisira was silent, Sir repeated the question and Sir continued his talk. 'It is intriguing for me the way Harsha spoke at the Conference. What did he say and what did I want him to say. When he spoke it appeared that he had something in the back of his mind. He is concerned about himself only. There was a feeling of disdain in me'. Sir was silent for a while and spoke again. 'There are three people I consider as Divisional Heads, One Sisira, two, Harsha and three Hewavitharana. I have allowed Harsha all freedom and every facility. Why cannot he work'?

P. Hewavitharana

'Hewa always says I do not visit him. I left on the 3rd and spent the entire day on the 4th in Deniyaya, Matara. First we went to Angunakolapelessa. (This is how Sir related the story to Sisira) There was a girl there. When I asked her where she was going she replied that she was going to buy some milk food. When I asked how far, she said -/40 cents journey. We asked the girl to get into the vehicle'. On the way Sir enquired from her about the preschool. She replied that she went to the jungle, got the required timber and constructed the pre-school. When asked about the expenses she had to incur she said much money. Sir asked her whether it was about Rs 100/-. 'She said no, not so much. Sir asked her whether it was about Rs 50/- and she said it was around that amount. Sir told someone to open the bag and give Rs 50/-. There were no Rs 50/- note. Only an Rs 100/- note was there. It was given to the girl. She vehemently refused to accept it. Sir forced her to accept it.

'Hewa has sent me a letter blaming me for giving the girl Rs 100/-.I thought you were far ahead. But you are still at the starting point'. Then Sisira began to speak. 'I have started the three monthly training programme. Why do you suspect? Why do you scrutinize our work so much'? 'Sisira, I am not finding fault with your programmes. I was only noticing the shortcomings. You always think you are right. But it is not right'.

'I appreciate and value only some parts of the work performed for the Movement, but not in totality. You make it so. I always try to build the Movement towards perfection. There are no people to help me in this effort. People I trust try to become area heroes….."

Pemsiri malli married Indrani Nangi of the Batik Section and left Colombo. He loved Sarvodaya and me then and now; he is presently employed at the Coconut Research Institute.

(I produce below a few excerpts from letters which bring back to my memory the past incidents)

As Vincent Aiya was not well I got the opportunity of travelling with Loku Sir for the first time. The trip was to the village named Malayaparanthikulam in Vavuniya. Ven. Thunnane Sumanatissa Thero, Mr. Karunananda and Kiriwandeniya Aiya were the others who joined us. We were travelling in the Land Rover 1785 driven by Siripala Aiya. We had our lunch in the Dambulla Resthouse. Noticing the small portion of food I served for myself, Mr. Karunanada said to me, "Young man, you have to eat well." Although Mr. Karunananda appeared to be a very haughty personality, his face portrayed softness.

After lunch Loku Sir took over the driving, he drove very fast. I was getting nervous. I recollect vividly a certain Incident. We had to be in Kandy by 8.00 a.m on that particular day, but we left Methmedura in Moratuwa after 5.30 a.m. The green colour vehicle which you drove that day was later given to Professor Nandsena Ratnapala with Perera Aiya as driver. Both Professor Ratnapala and Perera Aiya are not among the living today. Passing Kadawatha, you were driving very fast when two police constables ordered you to stop, saying, “Is this the way you drive? Give your licence.” You replied, “Ralahamy (a respectable way of addressing in Sinhala, a police constable) we are in a hurry to reach Kandy. That is why I had to drive a little faster. The instant reply from the constable was. “Good answer. The way you drive would take you to Kanatta (cemetery) and not Kandy. Get me your licence.” Loku Sir gave his licence. The constable's attitude changed. Please forgive us, Sir. We stopped the vehicle as we could not recognize you. Please proceed.” Oh, no. It is your duty you performed.” Constable, “Sir, when we look at the way you serve our country can we ever go against you? Please forgive us and you proceed.” You replied. “Thank you very much. Then we shall take your leave. May the blessings of the Buddha be with you."

You addressed me, "Pemsiri, do you know what the policemen thought? I said no sir. "They thought you were the master and I the driver. I am in shirt and sarong and you are in trousers." I said, "You are respected countrywide. I consider myself to be fortunate to be a close companion to you."

There was a small Family Gathering on which Ven. Tunnane Sumanatissa Thero delivered a speech. He was a very clever orator who had the natural capacity for simple village parlance. His examples are akin to Saddarmaratnavaliya.

One example given by the Ven. Thero, "When I first came to this village and started delivering the five precepts, the scene of the female children worshipping was like coconut rafters stacked in a woodshed." Another incident I remember, I was not in the Sangha Order, as a small chap. I attended a village wedding. Unlike it is found today, in the past at functions people used to drink in hiding and in their drunkenness used to come out with past animosities and become quarrelsome. In this wedding too there was a commotion and I peeped in through curiosity. People were saying, "Give a few blows on to her back. Then a man delivered a hard blow to the back of a woman seated on a mat. Receiving the blow a chunk of pork came out of the woman's mouth. The greed for pork made her swallow a piece of pork as she was toothless! The greed in this instance could have caused even death."

At a conference of monks at a Pirivena in Kekirawa where Pandit Henpitagedera Gnanashiha Nayake Thero, Ven. Havanpola

Ratnasara Thero, Prof. L. G. Hewage, Mr. Karunananda and Mr. Kiriwandeniya were present, Pandit Henpitagedera Gnanasiha Nayake Thero responded to a question by a young monk who wanted an explanation from Dr. Ariyaratne about Sarvodaya's principle of non violence and its activities in poor fishing villages.

Pandit Gnanasiha Thero, “If you start thinking in this pattern we will not be able to consume a sprat at an alms giving and also even rice, as quite a number of worms get killed in the process.” On the return journey, in the vehicle Pandit Gnanashiha Thero commented, “At certain times we need a loose garb.”

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PEOPLE WHO BITE THE HAND WHICH FEEDS THEM

We were involved in building a road in the village of Habaraduwa, putting in voluntary effort and we had our usual Shramadana camp. This road was neighbouring the residence of Mr. G.K.F. Wickremasekera, a school inspector of Habaraduwa, Talpe. I remember that this road bordered a stream and stretched up to the railway station. During the Shramadana, we stayed the nights in a small temple in the village. It was the normal practice to hold Family Gatherings every night. During one of these Family Gatherings, I noticed a youth, delivering his speech in a manner most appropriate to the occasion and very effectively too. I spoke to him and found out that he was successful in the GCE (O) Level and was staying at home undecided of any steps about his future. I explained to him about the leadership programmes that Meth Medura in Moratuwa conducted and if he so wished he could follow such a programme and sharpen his skills.

He accepted my suggestion with overwhelming joy.

This I recollect would have been during the second half of 1971. Let us call him Wimalasena. Wimalasena is now at Methmedura. He is our latest inmate. Like the rest of about 40 resident members he too engaged himself in various training programmes and educational activities from 5.00 a.m till 10.00 p.m. As he was keen in handicrafts and machinery related learning we allowed him space to reap the maximum in these areas.

One day I saw this youth, who normally has a playful nature, in a pensive mood. I called him to my office and addressed him, 'Wimalasena, I have told all of you that everyone under the roof of Meth Medura should be happy. You have forgotten this happiness and today you are with a darkened face. What is the reason'?

His face appeared darker still.

'Sir', he spoke as if he was about to cry. 'Sir, you are aware that we are very poor people. My mother has taken Rs 300/- keeping our house as security. Now the interest has been added on and the property is going to be forfeited. Today, I received a letter from my mother to this effect. I am very sad from the time I came to know about this. This house is the only asset we possess."

I thought for a while and decided that I should help him.

I told him, 'I will help you. In a few days time I will receive my salary.Then I will give you Rs 300/-. Give the Rs 300/- to your mother and see that your worry is over. Without feeling sad go and attend to your studies'.

I received the salary and in the presence of Piyadasa Aiya of Unawatuna who was a driver at that time, gave Rs 300/-. Doing so, I told Wimalasena 'Here is your Rs 300/-. Go home with Piyadasa Aiya, give the money to your mother, worship her and come back.'

Both of them were at Meth Medura that day. When I enquired about the journey, Piyadasa Aiya said that Wimalasena's home was on top of a hill and that Piyadasa Aiya waited in the car until Wimalasena returned. I felt that Piyadasa Aiya was not happy about my good deed and appeared not inclined to appreciate it.

A few days passed by.

Those days I was in the habit of walking around Meth Medura in the night. It was bright with moonlight and the time was about 11.30pm. I heard someone's voice from the front corridor. I walked towards the back of the house and listened attentively. The voice was that of Wimalasena. He was talking to someone.

'Our Sir is a Bodhisattva. Sir got caught to my story. One day I pretended to be very sad and when Sir enquired I said that our house was about to be forfeited against a loan taken keeping the property as security. On hearing this Sir gave me Rs 300/- after a few days and wanted me to settle everything and come back. I gave Rs 100/- to my mother, bought this shirt and purchased the book Mano Vikara by Sugathamuni Gnanasiri. There is some more money left and I shall buy something'. I distinctly heard Wimalasena. I could not believe my ears. I asked myself, 'Is a human being capable of doing such a thing, uttering such words?'

I had a feeling of great sadness about this person.

I received less than Rs 1,500/- as a teacher. It is with this money and the gifts by M/s. Karunananda, Upali Senanayake and Titus Ratnayake that I managed to maintain about 40 poor youth, my wife and children. To me who worked with such dedication, the deceitful act of this person generated a feeling of repulsion and sadness.

I decided to deliver the final talk at the Family Gathering the following morning.

We get up at 5.00 a.m and at 5.30 a.m we conduct the Family Gathering every day. Our practice was to begin the Family Gathering activity with Pubudu Geeya (the song of awakening we sing every morning), followed by Bhavana and allocation of work and then the final speech is delivered. I related the entire episode in detail about Wimalasena. Surprise showed on everyone's face.

I noticed Wimalasena looking down bending his head in fear.

At the end of the talk I enquired from the gathering whether any punishment should be given and if so what that punishment should be. Everyone unanimously voiced that Wimalasena should be sent away for his betrayal, from the united family we were.

I addressed Wimalasena who was still looking down in fear and told him to leave the premises after breakfast and that he can use the balance from the Rs 300/- for travelling.

A little while later I noticed through the window of my room how Wimalasena was leaving the premises.

At this moment a Ven. Bhikkhu was delivering a sermon over the Radio 'Good people, always do good by the others. Then you will naturally receive good results. If you go against this principle the result you get too may come your way aligning with your action'.

Undoubtedly, Wimalasena too would have heard this part of the sermon.

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THIS IS A CLIENT OF MINE........

When we were residing at Delgahayata Gedera in Maradana our family physician was Dr. Wijeratne. He was a very kind-hearted, humble and very good friend of the family. After taking residence at Meth Medura in Moratuwa, for a long time we were in the habit of consulting him. Once I went to Dr. Wijeratne seeking treatment for a stomach condition I was suffering from. I remember the year as 1971. Dr. Wijeratne's treatment did not cure my ailment. He suspected my condition to be appendicitis and referred me to a well-known surgeon. He gave me a letter stating that I should be admitted immediately into the surgeon's ward.

Rs 350/- was required for the surgery. I paid the money after which I asked the doctor whether he was the surgeon who would operate on me. 'Yes, yes.' He said. “It is an honour to treat a person of your stature. Besides this, we are from the same area and perhaps we might be related to each other. My mother-in-law too helps your social service work. I will perform the operation”. Saying so, he referred his diary and said, “I can definitely operate on you day after tomorrow”.

Within the next three weeks, I was due to attend a meeting in Switzerland organized by the United Nations. I enquired whether I would be able to attend this meeting after the operation. He assured me that after one week I would be fit enough to undertake any journey. Next day, producing the letter he gave me, I got myself admitted into his ward and was given a bed. A surgeon and his assistant examined me and decided to operate on me the next morning.

I can remember that I was wheeled on a stretcher to the surgery. While I was wheeled I recognized an intern whom I have taught at Nalanda, who accompanied me to the operating theatre, I had no time to speak to him. I was anesthetized by a female doctor. I was watching the female doctor giving me the injection to anesthetize me. Next thing I saw was the doctors and nurses clad in green. Then I went to sleep or I became unconscious.

I regained consciousness next day. My surgeon came, smiled and said "You are alright" and he left.

Although my wound was not healed I went home. Thereafter, on a number of occasions my friend Dr. Lakshman Silva visited me at Meth Medura, examined my wound and dressed it.

I was able to attend the conference in Switzerland as scheduled. After the conference was over I went to Sweden and stayed with Dr. Ohrling who was a renowned specialist in Europe in the field of kidney transplant. His son Dr. Staffan Orhling was a good friend of mine. Even by then, the wound was not healed and it gave me pain on and off accompanied by numbness. While in conversation with Dr. Ohrling one day, I showed the wound. I noticed Dr. Ohrling's eyes wide open when he looked at the five inch long cut. His next question was "Who performed the operation"? I said it was one of the best surgeons in Sri Lanka.

He laughed.

The same day he took me to the hospital he was working in, cleaned the wound and sutured it. After three days of treatment the wound healed completely.

On my return to Sri Lanka I went in search of Dr. Asoka, the intern who accompanied me to the surgery and wanted to know from him the details regarding my operation.

His story was a surprise to me.

“Sir, you have performed great meritorious acts in your previous births. When you were taken to the surgery if I was not there, the same fate of Ven. Dr. Kotagama Wachissara Thero would have been yours too.”

“Why do you say so? What happened that day”?

“Sir, do you think the surgeon under whom you entered hospital operated you? He did not do the operation. Another doctor, a novice in the profession operated on you. He could not find your appendix. Sweating all over, he cut you. I realized that he was very upset. I also noticed that your blood was giving a bluish hue. The lady doctor anesthetist who was very agitated did not look at the oxygen cylinder but was watching the operation. Oxygen cylinder was empty and I just screamed without my knowledge. When I showed them the empty cylinder they fixed a new cylinder. Every ten minutes I visited you and I was relieved when I noticed that you were conscious that night.”

This was his story.

Listening to Dr. Asoka I heaved a long sigh and thanked him for saving my life. But I forgot the incident after a few days.

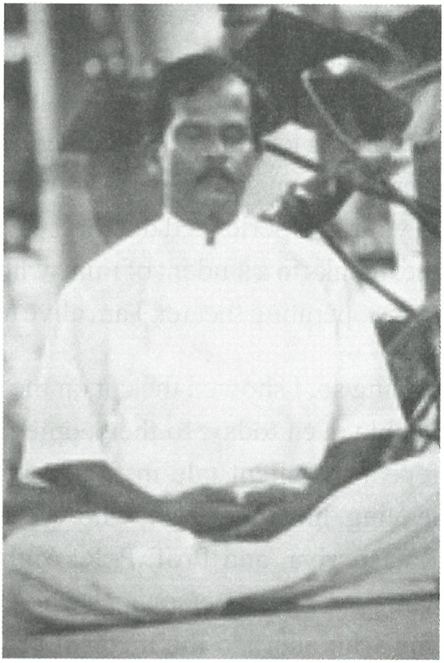
What brought me great surprise was the fact that the surgeon who was supposed to have operated on me used to tell the 'big' people at various parties and functions, pointing at me, “He was my client.”

These statements hurt me. One day at a conference at the BMICH where a judge of the Supreme Court, the American Ambassador and some others were present, he repeated the 'my client' story. I reached the final limit of my patience and thought I would put a stop to this straightaway. For everyone to hear I said, “Doctor you have been mentioning this client talk many times. This is not the complete truth. I will explain it today. I paid your fee to get the operation done by you. According to this I am your client. But on the day of the operation you were not seen anywhere near the operating theatre. I almost died due to your inexperienced doctor trying to operate on me. Fortunately for me, thanks to a student of mine who was an intern who happened to be at the operating theater, I am alive today.”

Saying so, I showed the cut on the right side of my stomach, which is visible even today, to the people present and told the surgeon not to repeat the client tale in future and left the place. I saw the people leaving him, amongst who were Prof. C. C. de Silva, Prof. K. Rajasooriya, and Prof. P. R. Anthonis who were my close friends. They were great personages who belonged to the previous generation and who adorned the medical profession and it is a pity to see this noble profession tarnished by commercial doctors of the type who repeated the 'my client' story.

IT IS SARVODAYA WHICH RESCUED ME FROM IGNORANCE OF SAMSARA

A. GUNAPALA UGGALLA



Mr. Gunapala Uggalla

As it is my intention to mention all possible details about my colleagues at Sarvodaya in Bhava Thanha Volumes, I requested a few of them to write to me about their experiences. One such person is Gunapala Uggalla Malli. He is presently the Meditation Instructor at Vishva Niketana. This is his story.

Born in the village of Mirigama in Gampaha District, I am the youngest son in a family of nine sisters and brothers. Even as a small child, just at the first stage of speaking, I used to gaze at the sky and watch stars. I wanted to know the difference between the earth and the sky while yet a child. I spent hours on end involved thus. At the age of 15 -16 years I read books on Abhidharma, Relativity and tried to understand what reality amounted to. At the age of 10 -12, I was in the habit of meditating, in a small room in our house, although I did not know what meditation was.

I completed my secondary education at D.S. Senanayake Vidyalaya and scored high marks in the University Entrance Examination. As I knew about the inhuman ragging that was prevalent at the Peradeniya University at that time, I decided against entering the University and wanted to be a hermit in the jungle. By 1975, I had read thousands of books on various subjects and I was in the habit of discussing many deep aspects of the *Dhamma (*Buddhist doctrine) with many erudite lay and clergy. In the meantime I started a Buddhist Youth Society in the village. Along with 200 to 250 youth members of the Buddhist Society I visited many Buddhist shrines, organized *Sil* campaigns (observing 8 precepts) coupled with meditation programmes. On account of the knowledge we thus acquired we decided to enter the Buddhist Order of Monks and sought the help of Ven. Pandit Henpitagedera Gnanasiha Thero, a renowned Buddhist scholarly monk. A group of us went to the Pathakada hermitage where the Ven. Thero was resident, situated near Pelmadulla town, on January 11, 1977 around 2 am, in spite of the very heavy rain.

Next morning, after listening to us, the Ven. Thero advised us.

"During a certain period of my life I too got involved in politics. But now I realize how futile an effort it was, plunging us and the country into a yet deeper abyss, with no means of developing the country. I am now with Sarvodaya Leader Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne engaging myself in social service activities. People like you cannot be found one in a million today. I suggest that you gentlemen join me on a visit to Moratuwa and meet Dr. Ariyaratne."

The following day itself we reached Meth Medura in Moratuwa and met Dr. Ariyaratne who had a very long conversation with us, in the course of which he mentioned to us that the country was on a downhill journey taking an opposite direction to wholesome life and everywhere corruption reigned and that he started Sarvodaya in order to make this country once again a Dharmadveepa (Land of Righteousness) and a Dhanyagara (Land of Plenty). Saying so, he requested us to join Sarvodaya. These words of Dr. Ariyaratne replaced the frustration in us with new hope for a future.

Under the guidance of Dr. Ariyaratne, I began my career with Sarvodaya as the Chief Education Coordinator of Anuradhapura District Centre. Until 1984 I functioned as the District Education Coordinator of Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Vavuniya, Puttlam and Trincomalee. During the period 1984 to 1985 I was the Assistant District Coordinator of Galle District Centre. From 1985 to 1990 I functioned as the Director in charge of the first community based rehabilitation centre, a project undertaken by Sarvodaya Suwasetha. From 1990 to 1995 I was attached to the Sarvodaya President's Archives. Later, from 1995 to 1997, under his guidance, I visited 140 villages which were the first villages to receive the Sarvodaya development services and prepared a comprehensive 600 page document covering their activities. I was in charge of the Sarvodaya Bio Diversity and Environment Protection Unit from 1997 to 2000.

In the meantime, under the guidance of Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne I function to date as the main meditation Instructor at Vishva Niketana and I was able to provide training to tens of thousands of local and foreign individuals and participate in a number of international programmes during my service with Sarvodaya for nearly 25 years. In 1985 I participated in the programme conducted in U.S.A Boston for the purpose of evaluating the development activities of Sarvodaya

Oxfam. I was a participant at the International Development Conference held in Milano, Italy in 1986. About 3000 professionals participated in this Conference and I was the Chairperson of the second day when I delivered the keynote address. The talk I delivered titled 'Religion, Culture and Development,' was translated into five languages for broadcasting live.

In 2001 I received eleven days training at the Vipassana Centre in Jaipur, India.

For me, who was a lost person in the *samsaric* (cycle of births and deaths) journey, Dr. Ariyaratne was the Guru who held constantly a torch to light my path and I salute him with reverence.

“May all beings be happy and secure.”

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Uggalla Malli who conducted meditation programmes in all the districts of the country including the north and the east suffered from cancer. He was taking western treatment but was able to overcome the agony of the disease by applying meditation. Until his last, he conducted the prisons meditation programme. He suffered a severe attack and I arranged for him to be sent to hospital. He worshipped me and got inside the vehicle, where at that moment I was not certain whether I would ever be able to see Uggalla Malli alive again. He left us for good during the night of 16th October 2004.

His body was kept at Sarvodaya Headquarters for the people to bid him farewell and last rites were performed at the Rawatawatte cemetery. May Gunapala Malli attain the supreme bliss of Nirvana. Birth 10th July 1950 Demise 16th October 2004.

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IN A FULL POT, THE WATER IS STILL PROFESSOR NANDASENA RATNAPALA

I dedicate this chapter to honour and value the services of a learned and humane Professor who, from the very start of Sarvodaya and until now, is supporting all Sarvodaya work; assisting Sarvodaya to take the correct path by pointing out our deficiencies; conducting an extensive research into Sarvodaya activities and introduced our work to the world community.

This person is none other than Professor Nandasena Ratnapala, great in word and deed, a writer celebrity in literature, social researcher and anthropologist of great renown and a social service worker.

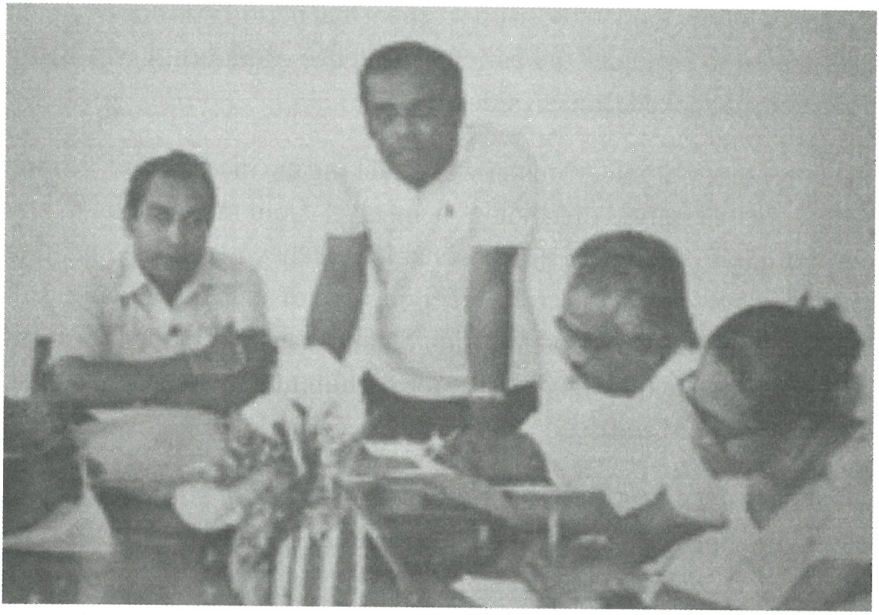
Professor Nandasena Ratnapala

I had the good fortune of meeting Professor Nandasena Ratnapala when I was resident at Delgahayata Gedera, Maradana, during mid 1950s. During that period I was in the habit of visiting the Ratna Book publishers in Maradana to buy some of the latest books, and scan through papers and magazines. It was there that I first met the Professor. I remember that during that time there was a magazine edited by the Professor devoted to critical book reviews, brought out by this Publisher. The friendship which began that day has continued until now. I consider it a very special event in my life. We were very close friends by the 1970s. In one respect that period was one in which I appeared to be under the baneful influence of Saturn. I was being repeatedly attacked from all sides.

A very senior Cabinet Minister was attacking me incessantly. Some of my friends started distancing themselves from me, not due to any fault of mine, but due to the reasonable fear they may have had, that they themselves may be at the receiving end of state displeasure. But my friend Professor Ratnapala did not take that path. In the true spirit of friendship, he remained beside me, continuing to assist and advise me, in both word and deed.

He addressed me as 'Ari' and I called him 'Nande'. I still remember a saying that of which he reminded me often. He said, "Ari.*'Dhammo Have Rakkathi Dhammacharing'"*. It means,"A person leading a virtuous life is protected by virtue itself". I am not certain whether he repeatedly came out with this quotation fearing that I would abandon the path of virtue and resort to unwholesome activities due to the very nature of the attacks aimed at me! Nande being with me, supporting me and advising me was one of the main reasons that helped me face fearlessly, the cruelties inflicted upon me. At the end of the saga I was the winner, making me stronger, sharpening my wit and will. Through this I developed my self-confidence to carry forward my life and work.

I like to put on record that it is the self-confidence, the courage and the sharpening of the skills I acquired during this time, which enabled me to extend the village level Sarvodaya work to other lands. I believe that this attack from a senior Government Minister was a blessing in disguise for me.



Prof. Ratnapala addressing a meeting - left to right - seated Dr. Leel Gunasekera, my self and Prof. Swarna Jayaweera.

Professor Ratnapala was able to grasp very well, the philosophical and academic background of the thousands of activities and programmes launched at village level throughout the country, in accordance with the Sarvodaya philosophy I had chosen. I continued with creating, developing and spreading the much needed services to the community and was not interested in a study of the academic aspects. But Professor Ratnapala who observed these activities deeply was able to grasp these aspects which escaped me.

Later on, he joined the Sarvodaya Research Institute and serving voluntarily as Director, published over 30 books on the academic aspects of the Sarvodaya services. Also with considerable difficulty he was able to assemble my lectures and writings in English and compile them into a set of 8 Volumes.

Since all these publications were made available to the attention of learned men and women world-wide, the world started turning towards Sarvodaya.

On account of this, the Gangodawila Vidyodaya University (now Sri Jayewardenepura University) where I received my higher education, Amilio Aguinaldo Unilversity of Philippines and Soka University, Japan awarded me honorary doctorates. It is with the publishing of these volumes by Professor Ratnapala, that I received membership of prestigious institutions such as the World Academy of Arts and Science and Club of Budapest.

All these doors were made open to me by my true friend Nande. Professor Nandasena Ratnapala was the first scholar who made known to the world, fearlessly, that there was an academic, scientific essence in the community services rendered by me during a life-time. I am eternally indebted to him.

I saw him then and I see him now as a walking university. I am happy and I consider myself fortunate to have associated with this 'university' for over five decades.

We travelled together to many countries such as England, U.S.A, Germany, Netherlands, India and Nepal. During our stay in the hotel rooms of those countries, every night I would do some reading, prepare the notes I needed and when I got ready to sleep, I would see that Nande sleeping and snoring away. But when I awake around 2 a.m. the scene which invariably meets my sight is that of Nande doing some writing. This was his way of life.

Anyone visiting him any day would notice him seated in the upstairs veranda of his home, engaged in writing. His writings embraced many a subject, especially books on the essence of Buddhist literature, numbering over 100 to date.

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During the International Conference

The research he did on the lives of beggars, living as a beggar, I regard as a landmark study in the local university system. It was an authentic research. I am aware that the many months he spent as a beggar amongst beggars endangered his health. I describe his research as, "Living in Research", using life experiences in research.

It is doubtful whether any government that came into power, so far, made use of the research conducted by Prof. Ratnapala. I believe that his research on crime escalation, alcoholism, substance abuse, tourism, AIDS and prostitution would have been of very considerable assistance to the state in the framing of state policies.

Professor Ratnapala's life was not a bed of roses. Trials and tribulations of any person were there, for him too. I was a close witness always. The possession of unwavering mental strength, a clear vision of life, limitless patience in the face of challenges, were significant features which I observed in this great human being. He has not insulted anyone anytime. When speaking of a person who has committed grave atrocities against him, even then, there was equanimity evident in him. On many occasions, he would come up with a humorous story from an ancient book, compare the actions of the one who was hostile to him with those in the story and derive a pleasant enjoyment. He was such a patient and cultured person.

Prof. Ratnapala excelled himself in various fields.

If he engaged himself in film-making, not only did he enrich it with art and technology but also with humanity. It was the same if he composed a poem. Though blessed with all these abilities, skills and knowledge, his humility exceeded all these. Whenever I see him, I am reminded of the proverb frequently mentioned by our elders that, “In a full pot the water is still”.

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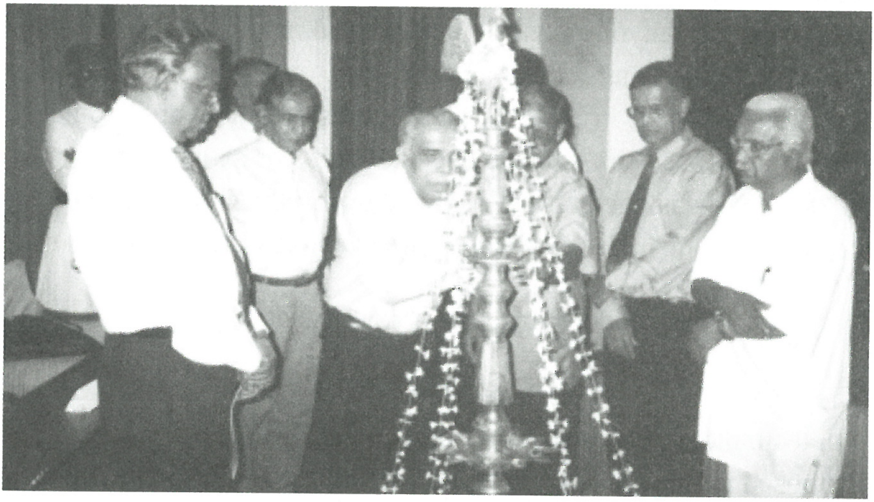
I did not think that I would be writing an epilogue to a chapter I wrote sometime back. It only re-confirmed Buddha's words, “What one expects does not happen; the unexpected happens.” Prior to leaving the country to spend two-weeks in Japan, I visited Nande on 2nd August 2007. With great enthusiasm he explained to me about his latest research. What happens after death? When he described his findings about some lay people and clergy who died recently, I felt tremors in my body. He has written books on many people about Karma taking effect in this very life, in his analysis of the latter. I felt that what he was doing now was not secondary to his earlier work. He said "Ari, have a safe journey back. I am impatient to tell you some more about my findings."



The Last Two Meetings Prof. Ratnapala Attended before He Suddenly Passed Away (Lighting the Oil Lamp - Prof. Ratnapala)

After finishing my programme in Osaka, Japan I was getting ready to leave for Tokyo when I received a telephone call from home which shook me emotionally. I was told that my dear friend Nande was no more. I cancelled my visit to Tokyo and Krishna and I took the earliest aircraft to Colombo.

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Launch of "Vishva Tharanga" Magazine

From the airport I headed to Sri Jayewardenapura University where my friend's body was lying in peace. There were many laymen and clergy waiting to pay their last respects. The last rites were performed at the Borella cemetery.

May Professor Nandasena Ratnapala attain Nibbana.

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PRINCE DESCENDING FROM THE CLOUDS ABOVE

People who have read the first and second Volumes of Bhava Thanha would be familiar with the multitude of people who were with me continuously and made sacrifices in the task of nation building. But there is a great drawback in some of our Buddhist monks, community leaders and the general public. That is, the fear they possess relating to the 'big families' and the people associated with such 'big families'. The best example is Kumar Rupasinghe whom I knew.

I was on a visit to Sweden. Suddenly Mr. Koelmayer who was our Ambassador in Sweden called me on the phone and made a request. This is what he said. “A person by the name of Acha Lanerolle from London was bringing disgrace to Sri Lanka by making degrading statements concerning Mrs. Bandaranaike, the government and the entire country.” He was due to address the same conference that I was to address. The ambassador wanted me to protect the honour and dignity of Sri Lanka. I explained to him that it was his duty to safeguard the good name of the country and in that direction; I assured him that I would truthfully do whatever possible.

Acha Lanerolle reminded me of a picture of Karl Marx. Lanerolle, according to my memory, was a fat, short built person with a long beard, black flowing hair and attired himself in a long black overcoat. He appeared to display a revolutionary personality. From his speech he tried to prove that Sri Lanka was a police state under Mrs. Bandaranaike. On the cover of a booklet he carried, there was the picture of Sri Lanka encased in fencing wires. He distributed a booklet titled 'Sri Lanka a Police state'.

After he concluded his speech I asked him when he last visited Sri Lanka. The answer was, "20 years back." I told the audience that I left Sri Lanka two days ago and I was fully aware of the situation in Sri Lanka more than he did. I corrected his speech, where correction was needed and explained to the audience the true situation prevalent in Sri Lanka. Before I could finish my speech he left the conference saying that he had to take a 'plane to England and that any delay would result in him missing the flight. I gave a detailed description on Sarvodaya and its activities.

Mr. Kumar Rupasinghe

After concluding my tour of Scandinavian countries, Europe and North America, immediately, on my return to Sri Lanka I visited Mrs Bandaranaike. I carried with me the booklet 'Sri Lanka a Police State'. I entered Temple Trees through the front door and I saw Kumar Rupasinghe -for the first time- walking out of Temple Trees with Acha Lanerolle.

Besides saying, "Good Evening", I had nothing further to talk with them. Kumar Rupasinghe was married to Sunethra, the eldest daughter of Mrs. Bandaranaike. Some officials who were present there told me that Rupasinghe, son-in-law of Mrs. Bandaranaike is a powerful person, holding the position of Chairman, National Youth Services Council. I related the incident which took place in Sweden to Mrs. Bandaranaike and handed over the booklet stating that it was not appropriate for me to say anything as Acha Lanerolle is hand in glove with her son-in-law. Saying so, I left Temple Trees.

A few days later Mr. Kumar Rupasinghe spoke to me over the telephone in a somewhat authoritative tone and said that he wanted to visit Sarvodaya Headquarters, Meth Medura on such and such a day at such and such a time. Although I began working with youth of the country more than two decades ago, which he was just starting, I obeyed the orders of this 'prince' in the same manner Buddha acted when Sacchaka ordered Buddha 'to stand up, come here, go back, come back' and so on. Buddha obeyed him first and then refused.

Mr. Kumar Rupasinghe, Chairman National Youth Services Council came to Meth Medura, visited all the Units, spoke at the Family Gathering, signed the visitors' book and left. Our discussion afterwards centered round the visit of Mr. Felix Bandaranaike, a nephew of Mrs. Bandaranaike who delivered a speech full of big ideas, similar to the speech just now given by Mr. Rupasinghe. We wondered whether it would be a repetition of harassment.

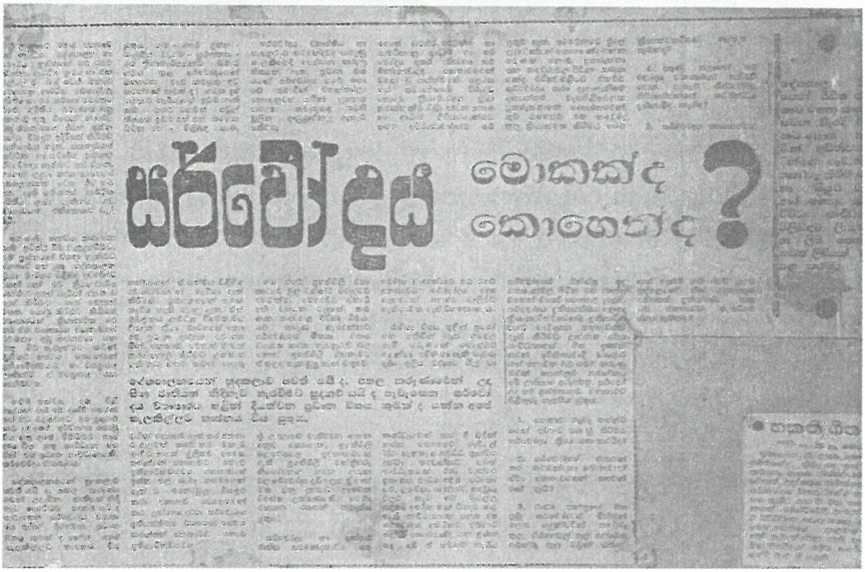
It is said that Mr. Kumar Rupasinghe published an anti-government newspaper titled 'Gini Pupura' (Spark of Fire). In Sri Lanka he started a paper 'Jana Wegaya' (People's Power). How this paper was used to attack the activities of Sarvodaya is explained below. Contents of the article; 'What is Sarvodaya? Where is it from?' Explain the purpose.

"The economic, political and social problems of the people of Sri Lanka have a direct bearing with the economic policy of this country. In any society the ownership of economic resources and utilization of such resources is the prerogative of the general public. Without granting this facility to the people it is not possible to find solutions to their problems. The economic and social problems of the public and the ownership of economic resources which have been snatched away from the public are connected to each other. Solutions should be sought recognizing this factor.

If any organization is geared towards preventing the people from understanding the true state of affairs, distancing them from acquiring the knowledge required for political action or distancing them from the importance attached to such action and diverting the attention of the public in another direction; such an organization, under the pretext of attending to the needs of the people basically serve only the needs of reactionaries keen on protecting and preserving the benefits of the organization itself.

If we accept this position and are willing to view it from this angle, our attention should be focused and directed at Sarvodaya Movement which is one of the leading organizations among others of its type.

Our aim should be to consider what the main stance of Sarvodaya is, which claims to be isolated from politics, which is ready to extend its compassion to awaken a sleepy nation. The village-problems of the village- united effort-volunteerism; limited to these activities what is the performance of Sarvodaya at village level. It isolates the villager from the true position relating to poverty, lack of land and the knowledge about the few rich people who have acquired the land. It may be possible to build a road through volunteerism. But volunteerism is not the answer to economic disparities. If any organization tries to cover the problem, divert the public away from the right path and make them lose their way; such an organization does not serve the public, but it serves the reactionaries. Sarvodaya takes the people away from reality and lead them towards imaginary solutions. Its principle is to serve the reactionaries.



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From "Janavegaya" an Attack on Sarvodaya

There are a number of factors that reveal the nature and progress of Sarvodaya. Sarvodaya has grabbed the less knowledgeable Buddhist monks from the villages; it has taken into its fold certain clever people who are against any progressive moves, who are supportive and who speak of the importance of dictatorship. There are doubtful areas when progressive people view the myth of Sarvodaya.

In taking into consideration the electoral seats, Sarvodaya is very actively present in the electorates where the M.P's work hard towards developing the electorate. There should be a secret here too.

It is a concealed factor from the public that Sarvodaya has international connections with West Germany and America which provide aid. Nations that are against socialism consider Sarvodaya to be sufficiently important for them to grant awards and aid. It is not impossible for the general public of Sri Lanka to view Sarvodaya doubtfully.

If an organization, making use of the opportunity given by lack of employment, bring youth from the village to Colombo, make them swallow the opium pill quoted with honey for Rs 75/- to Rs 300/- and make them to be in charge of a group, and if Sarvodaya is such an organization possessing the ability to own jeeps, vans, media material, tape recorders, emblems and money to provide food in camps, shouldn't we ask the question , 'Where does Sarvodaya get the money from'? It should not be concealed from the public that Sarvodaya is able to rope in youth when they leave rehabilitation camps with aiding and abating from the big people in authority. We have tried to establish that Sarvodaya is not an organization aimed at non-violence and keen on helping the helpless but it is an organization that supports reactionary forces. Sarvodaya should provide answers to the following questions.

Does it not work towards diverting people from the true situations?

What are the international connections of Sarvodaya? Why are these concealed from people? What is the meaning of citing big names in the government sector as Sarvodaya people in camps, prisons, departments?

Do not certain jeeps used for Sarvodaya work in the Southern Province belong to reactionaries?

Why is it concealed from the people that some individuals of the renowned have refused to accept leadership in Sarvodaya in the past?

We publish today another article concerning the activities of various organizations that are keen to divert the efforts of the public politically and try to lead them on a wrong path to fortify the existence of colonialism."

This is what the "prince" from the ruling family of Sri Lanka had to say about Sarvodaya at that time.

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THE PRINCE TAKES CHARGE OF MINISTER JAN PRONK

I first met the Minister of International Development Cooperation of Netherlands, Dr. Jan Pronk, when I addressed a meeting of the European Union in Strasburg. After my speech Dr. Jan Pronk spoke to me and promised me that he would send through NOVIB some food items such as milk food, butter, oil etc. as he was aware of the food shortage in Sri Lanka at the time. We built up a friendship and on a subsequent visit to Netherlands, I invited him to visit Sri Lanka. He, agreed to visit Sarvodaya. It was a private invitation involving a private visit.

Hon. Minister Mr. Jan Pronk, my daughter Charika is also in the picture.

It was my belief and I considered it my duty that I should inform the government, of this move, as it provided an opening for the Sri Lankan government to obtain aid from Netherlands. I informed Mr. Lal Jayawardena who represented Sri Lanka at the European Union about my invitation to Minister Jan Pronk to visit Sri Lanka which he has accepted. Also, I informed him that it was relevant that he should meet the Prime Minister officially and that she take this opportunity to apprise him of the development activities of Sri Lanka, although this was a private visit.

I was informed by a letter about Dr. Pronk's visit to Sri Lanka, on my return to the country. The previous morning I received a telegram that Dr. Pronk would visit Sri Lanka as a guest of the government and that he would reach Katunayake airport on such and such a day by such and such an aircraft. I too went to the airport at the appointed hour. I entered the VVIP lounge as no official present there prevented me. Mr. Deshapriya Senanayake, the then Deputy Minister of Planning, Mr. Kumar Rupasinghe and a few officials were present. The KLM aircraft reached Katunayake Airport on schedule. I followed Mr. Deshapriya Senanayake and the other officials who were walking up to the aircraft. Mr. Pronk got off the aircraft and shook hands with us. Besides, trying to tell something through eye contact he did not speak with me.

All of them left for Colombo in their vehicles and filled with deep disappointment about Mr. Pronk, I returned home. It was after 11.00 p.m when I reached Moratuwa. Before I could change my clothes the telephone rang and it was Mr. Pronk.

"Ari, I am not a prisoner now. Come to the hotel to speak with me". Within half an hour I reached the hotel and listened to Mr. Pronk.

"I wanted to see Sarvodaya. But your government has allowed me only one hour for this purpose. They have scheduled a visit to Thanamalwila for one hour. As they spoke condemning Sarvodaya on the way, I have decided to reduce the aid I promised to Sri Lanka."

As if in competition with Sarvodaya Thanamalwila Farm, Mr. Kumar Rupasinghe had started a farm in Embilipitiya, investing much government money and resources under the National Youth Services Council. After showing the efficiency of Mr. Rupasinghe they reached Thanamalwila Farm half an hour late. As they entered 'the Prince who descended from the clouds above' stated that they could not spend much time at Thanamalwila. For Mr. Pronk and all to hear I said-

"I invited this Minister. He came to Sri Lanka to see Sarvodaya activities. Without even allowing the Minister to visit the Sarvodaya Headquarters he was given one hour at the Thanamalwila Farm. Having arrived late they want to leave soon. I cannot accept this. According to the programme arranged one hour is allocated to Sarvodaya. There are 60 minutes to the hour. During the 60 minutes Minister will see what Sarvodaya has done in the 500 acre area. Only then may he leave."

I think that in one hour we were able to show Mr. Pronk in Thanamalwila, more than what Mr. Kumar Rupasinghe may have been able to show in two and a half days.

During Mr. Pronk's tour of the country, security was provided by a police officer who happened to be a student of mine at Nalanda. Although he was wearing the uniform and was obliged to respect his profession he was competent enough to comprehend the anti-ethical conversations which were going on.

The Honourable Prime Minister hosted a dinner in honour of Mr. Pronk. Neetha and I were invited. When we were about to leave for the dinner, the telephone rang. The person on the other end said that he was Dr. Dahanayake. He said that Neetha and I had been invited by mistake and requested that we refrain from attending the party. I told him that we will come to the hotel and it is more appropriate if we are told to leave the party then. There was silence and I felt that the person on the other end was confused. He broke the silence by saying "If you do that I will lose my job." I asked him about the person who instructed him to issue the order. He said that it was the Deputy Minister Mr. Deshapriya Senanayake. I told him that the invitation was from the Honourable Prime Minister and for him to check with her. He pleaded with me and said that he would lose his job and that he had no access to the Prime Minister. We felt sorry for the innocent official and refrained from attending the party.

Next day Mr. Pronk hosted a party for the Prime Minister and others. Both of us were there and I whispered to the Prime Minister why she had asked us not to attend the dinner hosted by her. She was flabbergasted. I told her, 'Madam, please do not get upset. These are the pranks of your son-in-law (the prince) who descended from the clouds above."

(I had recorded this incident more forcefully. But being mindful of Mr. Rupasinghe's involvement in civil society work currently, I have toned it down). Sarvodaya has no connection with his organizations. People who are on the warpath against him couple Sarvodaya with his organizations. Is it an irony of fate that people attack him with the same arguments he used against us? or is it a karma that rebounds during this life itself? (Ditta Dhamma Vedaneeya Karma)

Nevertheless, today (2006), we are happy that he is active in the field of civil rights. But it is ideal if the questions he raised then are applied to his own organization and answers being supplied by him. (at the time I am editing this volume the Prince and his organizations are no more operative.) Recently I read in the newspapers that he is no more in Sri Lanka but has taken legal action against his donor organization NORAD for stopping his grants!

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HOW THE DEPUTY EXCHANGE CONTROLLER WAS DEFLATED

Sometime back in the past the foreign exchange position in the country was at very low ebb. During this era whoever who travelled abroad was entitled to carry an amount equivalent to Rs 50/- or sterling pounds three and a half. I had to travel overseas frequently to participate in the advisory committee meetings of the World Health Organization. The rupees fifty was not sufficient to cover the sundry items like vehicle hire. On one occasion I explained the position by letter addressed to the WHO Headquarters at Geneva and requested them to advance at least Sterling pounds one hundred.

They sent the money to Grindlays Bank, Colombo and I went there to get the money. The officer at the bank attended to my need quickly and handed me a form containing all details and asked me to meet the Assistant Controller of Foreign Exchange at the Central Bank and submit my air tickets, passport, fill the form, obtain his approval and return it to the bank. This Bank officer was a very polite person. Accordingly, I went to the Central Bank.

The then Governor of the Central Bank, and some other officials were known to me personally. But I did not know the Assistant Controller of Exchange. Without disturbing the people I knew I went to the officer concerned. He was reading the newspaper. I spoke to him in English - "Pardon me for interrupting you Sir. Can you please study this form and sign it"? Without even looking at me but concentrating on the newspaper he said, "Leave the document and come tomorrow.

I have to study it." He appeared to be full of himself with officialdom.

I am not a person who gets angry often. This situation created in me great anger and in a high pitch tone I retorted. "I will help you to study the form. I am a teacher. I have the necessary qualifications to teach you." People seated at the nearby desks stopped their work and looked at me. I was in a furious mood and the Assistant Controller of Exchange also for the first time looked at me. Then I addressed him again. "Ah! Look at me well and look at the picture in the passport and also look at the name in the air ticket and try to understand whether these documents relate to me. Then sign. For this purpose I need not come another day."

At that moment I saw the Deputy Governor of the Central Bank Dr. Warnasena Rasaputram coming in. As he saw me he said. "'Ari Malli, what is the problem? What is this confusion?" I replied, "Your Assistant Controller needs twenty four hours to study me and I showed him how it could be done in two minutes." He laughed. The Assistant Controller placed his signature on the documents and asked me to sign them saying "Everything is O.K."

I said, "Thank you, Sir" and took the documents and left the place with Dr. Rasaputram. The nearby officers hid their smiles and with derision stamped on their faces looked at the Assistant Controller. What good would it do for the people to have public officers of this type?

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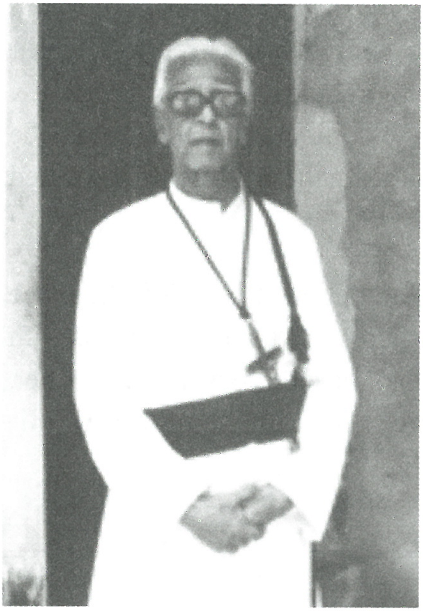
REVEREND FATHER MERCELINE JAYAKODY WHO UNITED BUDDHIST AND CHRISTIAN HEARTS

St. Anne's Church is only a short distance away from the pure white much revered stupa in Kelaniya town. Distressed by the national disasters which have occurred, I entered St. Anne's church during mid-day. Although no one was present in front of the church I went along the corridor to a room with a half open door.

I went to the church only to pay my respects and to congratulate the Rev. Fr. Merceline Jayakody who was respected and loved not only by the Christians but also by the Buddhists, patriots and artists of many disciplines. Apart from two students who were there conversing with him, there were no signs indicative of any special event having occurred. Tissa Wijewardene, Chairman of the Anglo Asian Group of Companies, another friend and myself were amazed at the simple surroundings of the 83 year old great man. Rev. Fr. Jayakody acknowledged our presence with a kindly smile lighting his face which reminded



Rev. Fr. Merceline Jayakody

me of the peaceful and harmonious feeling one gets on listening to a song, a poem or any other composition by him.

Rev. Fr. Merceline Jayakody (First from the right)

It was only in the previous evening that it was announced that the Rev. Fr. Merceline Jayakody was the winner of the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Communication, Literature and Creative Arts, an Asian award.

There were two small tables and six chairs which appeared to be of about the same age as the Rev. Father. At the corner was a small old motor car. Apart from the Certificate Award for Literature received from the Prime Minister in 1981, and the Kalasoori Award by the Tower Hall Foundation for composition of songs, what could be seen were only piles of old books scattered around the room.

We started talking. The Rev. Father born on 3rd June 1902 renounced the layman life and entered the order of clergy in December 1927. He was a teacher in St. Joseph's College, St. Peter's and St Patrick's colleges for 23 years and served in a number of dioceses.

He is a fine example for proving the fact that belonging to Christian Faith is neither a barrier for being a patriot nor a hindrance to sharing a heritage of a Buddhist country - Sri Lanka.

"Many generations past went to the temple for learning,
"The Yellow robe protected our country in times of darkness,
"Sri Lankan culture blossomed through temple dear,
"Yellow robe to the present day stays intact."

That is from a Sinhala Song composed by him.

He considers the manner in which Buddhist monks congratulated, embracing him when he won the Literature Award in 1981, to be the most generous gift he ever received which filled him with boundless joy.

"May there be a stupa in sight for the wandering eye,
"May a stupa come up where no stupa existed,
"May the intellect recognize the message so given,
"May the repeated view cast in virtue bountifully"
"Here is Buddha's foot imprint; revered worship continues,
"Day and night filled with joyous chanting of 'Sadhu'
"This is the land of virtue; our sea garlanding it with pearls,
"There is no land akin to this for any other land is second to this."

Not only did the Rev. Father compose poems that help awaken the national spirit, but also the ones which revealed the humane quality in him.

"My Christmas is when the poor has rice to stop hunger,
My Christmas is when there are no more rags,
My Christmas is when you are rid of sorrow
My Christmas is when sin goes to church "

(Translator's note - The original poems were enchanting. The beauty is lost in the translation)

People reading the poems by the Rev. Father would know that the service he rendered to the land of his birth, its culture and people was not through flower bedecked paths covered in soft carpets. I got up to leave, wondering how I could put into words and understand the thorny path taken by this noble man for half a century undergoing much pain and suffering. My eye then caught an English saying, pasted on the cover of an old book, which I believe reveals his vision for life. I produce this saying below.

> "Do not take the road already there.
> Instead walk where there is no road
> and create a new one"

I wished Rev. Father who is respected worldwide and who showed us the worth of a new road, long life, with the blessings of the Triple Gem and protection of God.

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HARMLESS DECEIT TO MEET SHORTFALLS

There is no positive, qualitative field of activity, which Sarvodaya has not engaged in. I have not faltered in taking whatever action that was needed when faced with situations of public welfare. It is my innate nature to try out novel activities with the support of responsible Sarvodaya members.

In mid 1980 people who watched the steady progress of Sarvodaya sought my help to individually involve themselves in community development activities in various fields. All these needed money, but we were prohibited from utilizing the money we received for any other purpose other than the one the money was given for. I employed two ways to find the required money. One was to include the money needed for these novel activities under a research column in an existing project. The other was to deposit part of the money I earned through writing, lecturing and publishing books in a separate account and use such money as I wished, for new creations.

It is very rare for lay people having family obligations to use the revenue they accrue through private means for public good. I am happy that I was able to help people in need, using my private money. But some people who receive such help are ungrateful.

Their idea is, “This is the money he gets as donations and we do not have to be grateful.”

Among them were quite a number of well known people, lay and clergy both. I try to get myself released from the illusory factor 'I and mine' and view such a situation with equanimity. Whenever I think of the people's ingratitude I have a silent laugh and what enters my mind is "Foolish people; do we do something to receive thanks? It is like giving money on interest." ('Jesus Christ cured ten lepers one afternoon. Only one leper was grateful. The other nine did not say thank you even - Luke 7:11-19')

I helped a professor, who had lost his job, to do his research on literature and compose a dictionary, the process which ran on for months. During the Wanasundera Commission, which was appointed to probe into the affairs of non-governmental organizations, and when charges were aimed at me, I requested this professor to provide me in writing, the amounts I gave him, for employing 6 staff members for one year, for his research. He was not kind enough to do so. When I read his articles in the papers today I am amused.

One day a woman from Moratuwella area came crying and requested for help to buy a coffin for her dead husband. A coffin at that time would have cost about Rs 300/- and I gave her this amount. After a few months the same woman came repeating the same story. I gave her the money and I had forgotten both incidents when the same woman came again and said the same thing. My wife Neetha was present and she enquired from the woman why her husband died so many times. The woman's reply was, "Lady, what's to be done? All these efforts are for survival".

I remembered how the so called 'big' people too deceived me and laughing to myself I sent the woman away giving Rs. 100/-.

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AJAHN SULAK SIVARAKSHA

In the international arena Mr. Sulak Sivaraksha is one of the active Asian Buddhist leaders I meet very often at inter religious and peace conferences in Europe, America and other countries. He was born on 27th March 1933 in Siam which is known as Thailand today.

Ajahn Sulak Sivaraksha

His early childhood education was connected with the Buddhist Temple although his education took place in a Catholic school. From 1953 to 1961 he studied in St. David College, Wales, United Kingdom and obtained a B. A Degree. Thereafter, he studied law and worked as a lawyer in Middle Temple. Mr. Chandra Zoysa and Judge P. Ramachandran were two Sri Lankan law professionals who studied with him. I was first introduced to Mr. Sulak Sivaraksha by Mr. Chandra Zoysa.

After two years he returned to Thailand and began the University Press. During this period Thailand was under dictatorship. He got permission to publish a social science journal. By 1963 this academic publication became an analytical magazine on politics. He became a close associate of Dr. Puey Ungakone, a renowned professional of the university and the Vice President of the Central Bank of Thailand. Dr. Puey was an honest personality who fled the country once, and returned to the home country as the President of the Central Bank of Thailand. During this period Sulak was influenced by the Prime Minister Mr. Sitthi Sipon who was a grandson of King Rama the IVth.

with Ajahn Sulak Sivaraksha
Ven. Pom Puey From Korea

He attired himself then and even now, in the national Siamese costume, which is a pair of short trousers and a long sleeved top reaching up to the knees. He carried a shoulder bag and a walking stick.

One day the Prime Minister Mr. Sitthi Sipon walked into his office and asked him, "Sulak, What do you know about the farmers in Siam? Have you been amongst them? Why don't you write about their helpless situation?" This conversation created a complete change in the direction of Sulak's life.

Thailand is a Buddhist country. Sulak's attention was drawn to predominant factors in the Buddhist doctrine such as justice, peace, sharing, justifiable legal procedures, human rights, eradication of poverty, building peace and the like. To what extent is the international political and economic systems are responsible and politically influence the economic and political situations of Thailand and other poor countries? How can these be changed? Is it not possible to adopt a non-violent, revolutionary Buddhist system? Sulak established very close associations with the great Buddhist monk Ven. Buddadasa, the young Buddhist monk Ven. Payutho and other Buddhist clergy as well as lay leaders and started challenging administrators and all administrative systems that were beneficial only to a handful of national and international groups. This he did through techniques found in Buddhism. Sulak was wrapped into endless court cases and had to spend much time in courts and prisons.

Dr. Sulak Sivaraksha is functioning as a guide, who using the Buddhist philosophy, is bringing about a fundamental non-violent change internationally, in Thailand his motherland and in the global community as a whole, ushering in a better society.

The International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) which he founded 20 years ago is a famous well accepted organization today. The main patron of INEB is the most respected Dalai Lama. It is his belief that a spiritual brotherhood should be established among Buddhists, Christians, Islamists, Hindus and Sikhs as well as agnostics. Mahatma Gandhi's statement,"When you encounter a person opposing your views you should be able to win him over through compassionate action" is an advice he keeps in mind always.

Another Movement that he founded is the Spirit in Education Movement (SEM). Dr. Sulak Sivaraksha was able to successfully create a worldwide public opinion that the Nobel Prize Winner Dow Aung San Suki should be released from house arrest and that Myanmar (Burma) should go back to the democratic process after dissolving the military regime. He also leads the struggle, for the Nobel Prize Winner, the most respected Dalai Lama who had been expelled from Tibet by China, to be allowed to return to Tibet and the military regime forcefully deployed by China, be withdrawn and freedom and democracy be established in Tibet.

His straight forward ideas stand in good stead for him to be respected by a large majority of world population and it has to be stated that there are strong States who are against him.

Sulak is my good friend, as he calls a 'Kalyana Mitra'. Together we propagate our non-violent revolutionary ideas in Siam, Sri Lanka and worldwide.

THE MERT MASON FAMILY OF THE USA

In the beginning of 1983 I planned a long journey. This trip which began from Katunayake Airport on 25th February 1983, filled with numerous experiences and many unforgettable incidents, spanned for five weeks in America, one week in Canada, three days in Philippines and came back home via Hong Kong.

In America I was scheduled to participate in the International Community Leadership Project Conference which was held in the State of Arkansas. As Ton de Wilde too was in America during this period, it was easy for me to arrange my programme. My travel itinerary was Colombo-Washington-Montreal - Ottawa - Los Angeles - Hawaii - Manila - Colombo.

The Conference in Arkansas was an international programme relating to training of community leaders. There were representatives from thirty five countries which included Canada, Kenya, India, Peru, Columbia, Bangladesh and me representing Sri Lanka. Mr. Nathan Gray functioned as the Project Director. Mr. Gray is a founder member of Oxfam and the Director of Boston Education and Communication Centre.

I left for Arkansas with Andy Mason. Andy's parents, Mert and Abby Mason are my very close friends. I addressed him as 'Andy Malli'. After spending one and a half years with Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka, Andy Malli joined me in my trip to America, on his return to home. Andy took away the monotony of my loneliness and treated me with much love and care.

Mason Family In America

We were flying by UL 513 Air Lanka over Zurich, Switzerland, 40,000 feet above ground. I first met Andy Malli at Mrs. Ruth Morganthau's residence in Cambridge, Massachusetts, America. He was a student of Mrs. Morganthau at the Brandise University. Andy took me by vehicle once when I had to visit a medical centre for a check-up. Andy was just about 20 years, and I requested him to work for Sarvodaya after completing his first Degree at the University. Acceding to my request he came to Sri Lanka.

Andy, smart and thin, with curly hair, adorned with a smile enchanting everyone who came across him was an amiable youth. In a few days he learnt Sinhala and was able to address family gatherings in good Sinhala. He gained experience through visiting many places in his field work. He worked on the joint project of the America Sri Lanka Overseas Foundation and Sarvodaya, functioning under the Deniyaya, Indigahahena Development Project.

Andy in front

When I left Sri Lanka to go to Europe in December 1985, on an official trip, I was fortunate to spend some time with Mert and Abby Mason and their son Andy. Bill Mac Clean, in Ottawa, is another friend, like the Masons, who I joyfully keep in my memory. While in America, I spent most of the time with the Masons occupying the ground floor of their house. Their home is about 45 minutes drive away from New York City in a town called Hastings on Hudson. On 18th December 1985 Andy took me to his place. Masons were always there to help me in my travel, accompany me and take me to places that I was scheduled to visit.

Masons' home is my home. The ground floor small room has a sitting room a wash area and toilet facilities. A large green stretch of grassland with huge trees was in view about 50 yards away, visible through 12 foot window panes. Just near a tree in the verandah of the house is a statue of the Buddha carved in Japanese art.

While spending time alone in this house, the thought entered my mind that I was going to be away from home for a long time. This is a question I ask myself many a times. Another perturbing thought was, "Why did I come here during this extremely cold weather which turns water into ice?" Although these ideas entered my mind due to loneliness, the reason for my leaving home was to address conferences at St. John's Cathedral, New York and Oxfam in England. All the expenses connected with my travel were borne by these organizations. Nevertheless, it is hard to be away from home for ten weeks.

Apart from delivering lectures, when considering the important outcomes gained from these travels, these were things which should have happened. To get the required assistance and establish Sarvodaya groups in many foreign countries were the main benefits received for Sarvodaya through my travel. Besides all these, there were other reasons related to the Movement. One was to give an opportunity to others to carry on with the Movement.

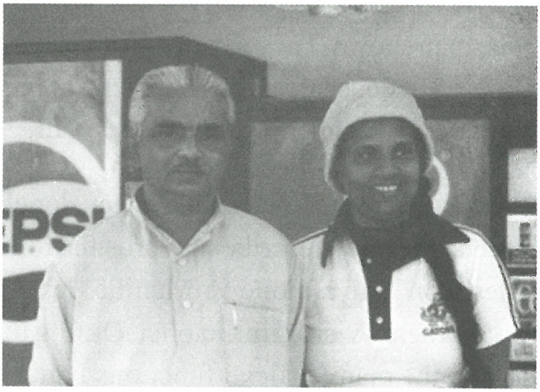
People who do not like Sarvodaya have expressed that Sarvodaya is a "one man show.' They say that Sarvodaya cannot survive without me. Such erroneous ideas have arisen due to some of our responsible workers not performing their duties well.

I remember other occasions when loneliness overtook me in my travels. I cannot describe in words the loneliness I felt when I left my eldest son Vinya alone in Manilla, after coming to Philippines via Japan where I visited in October. During the ten days I spent with him, despite the many official functions I attended, I felt very relaxed and joyful.

Dr. Vinya S. Ariyaratne

Vinya is one son that any father could be proud of. He is obedient, intelligent, shoulders responsibility well and keeps a balance between the positive and negative sides. He is loved by all. At that time I was filled with hope about the happiness that would be mine when Vinya completes the balance three and a half years and returns to his country as a qualified medical doctor. My life's legacy of service to humanity will be taken over by him one day.

I remember well the day I left Boston and went to Florida to see Amara *Nangi* (younger sister).



Amara Nangi (Younger Sister)

Spending two hours from Bostan to Atlanta and from there one hour to Gainsville I visited Amara at the Florida University. Dr. Daniel Susset was with me and we spent one week with Amara. I left Florida University, with sadness enveloping me. Nangi, Ranjit and Ananda came to the airport. I noticed through the glass panel Amara crying when we left her at the airport. It was a great relief to spend one week with Amara who was 13000 miles away from home. Amara had hired a vehicle for my travel, Ranjit and Ananda being a good supportive factor. When away from their families everyone feels the loneliness the same way. From the six of us in our family, only Amara had the opportunity of studying in a university abroad. I am happy that Amara opted to complete a course in special needs education for mentally retarded instead of a degree course, through the Fulbright Scholarship she gained.

Tour of the New York City from 30th July to August 8, 1988, at the invitation of Mert Mason

Mason Couple

Now I am travelling towards New York by KLM aircraft that left Sri Lanka at about 7.15 p.m. I am due to reach Karachi. The reason for the trip this time is the Birthday celebrations of Mert to be followed by efforts to obtain assistance for Sarvodaya. This is a long journey. Tomorrow morning at 6.00 I will reach Amsterdam and will leave for New York in the same afternoon.

Up to Amsterdam, Lawyer Daya Wettasinghe travelled with me. He was travelling to Toronto. After spending about seven hours at Amsterdam Airport, at 12.30 p.m I boarded KLM aircraft and reached JFK in New York at 8.15 p.m. As there was a big crowd, though Mert and Abby were close by, it took about 3 hours to locate them. We reached Mert's home in Hastings on Hudson. I spent the morning hours with Mert and Abby and spoke to Neetha and gave a call to Charika. But there was no one at her place. I telephoned Robert at NOVIB and gave him details of my return on the 15th; spoke to Lucy Creevy too; spent the morning preparing the programme for the next few days; arranged to meet Peter Goldmann of Rockfeller, Susan Eastman of Helen Keller and Dr. Larry Campbell. Frank Millspaw too would meet us. At 2.30 p.m Mert and I reached Rockerfeller Headquarters at Avenue of Americas. Frank Millspaw was there. Mr. Goldmann, the new President of Rockerfeller Foundation who took on duties two weeks prior, ushered us into his room. I had met him previously when he had been the President of New York Port. Peter about 45 years is thin and tall, and a friendly man. He is not haughty as the others of the Foundation I had met earlier. After about one and a half hours of discussions I mentioned that Rockerfeller Foundation should follow a new path. His idea was to get the developed and developing countries together for community development activities along with the nuclear disarmament.

I explained to him about our loan scheme, headquarters, maintenance of senior workers and distributed the literature on Sarvodaya. I hoped that I made a start.

We visited the Helen Keller Institute and met Susan Eastman, Larry Campbell and Geoff.

With Mert I will go to Save the Children U.S.A Headquarters at 10.00 a.m. today. Last week, I met Mr. Michael Gibbons the acting Director, in Moratuwa. He and his wife spent the entire day with us and I felt that they are willing to work with us. Mr. David Closinius the Assistant Director, Asian Programmes telephoned me and arranged the programme for that day.

At 11.05 a.m. Mert and I went to Westport and met Jimmy Boshdi, the President, Philys Dobbins, the vice President, Steve Simon and David Closinius and discussed about a long term plan of cooperation between the two organizations. Lucy and small Ari joined us at 1.30 p.m. We had lunch in a nearby restaurant.

I came back, got my eyes tested and bought a pair of spectacles which cost me USD 209.

We spent today in the village resort of Masons, 90 miles away from Hastings on Hudson to ensure that the place was ready for the meeting scheduled for next Saturday.

At 6.00 a.m. Mert and I reached La Guardia Airport and took the Eastern Shuttle to Boston. First we met Paul Varney at Oxfam and discussed about Sarvodaya-Oxfam cooperation. Then we met Jonathan Rossenhall, Michael Rosica and Rink Skinson of Equal Exchange. Michael and Rink are two wonderful young men who are instrumental in importing items to America from developing countries. They began by selling Sarvodaya tea and Nicaraguan Coffee.

Ruth Morgantau and Sara came to see me from Rhode Islands. Ruth contests in Rhode Island on the Congress ticket. These are my 'samsaric' relatives. They shower me with endless love, care and attention. All of us had lunch together.

We met Joe Short, the previous Executive Director of Oxfam. Erica and son were not there. After a 45 minute flight we returned to New York, Lagowasya Airport and came home at around 4.00 p.m. We attended a meeting titled 'Forum' in the night.

I telephoned Neetha and I was overwhelmed with joy on hearing the news about Professor Ediriweera Sarathchandra receiving the Ramon Magsaysay Award. I consider this as a personal reward. It is very fortunate that Sarathchandra became my friend in the evening period of his life. He was a great man whose talents were hidden because he was surrounded by selfish people. I am happy that I invited him to Sarvodaya and nominated him for the Ramon Magsaysay Award. While this brought him relief it was a great honour to Sarvodaya as well.

Sarathchandra was a humble artist, a literary figure of fame, from a middle class family; he rose to fame through personal effort with success he did not deviate himself from the nationalist he was. The fame he received from 'Maname', the Sinhala stage play also paved the way for a renaissance in Sinhala stage plays. There is no doubt that the entire country will rejoice for the Award he received. He appears to be not at home to receive my telephone call.

Tomorrow's birthday celebrations of Mert are due to take place in his village resort. After driving about two and a half hours we reached his village resort. No sooner as I reached the place I telephoned Professor Ediriweera. He appeared to be very happy. I gave him the necessary information relating to the journey he has to take.

Professor Ediriweera Srathchandra and Mrs. Sarathchandra

Mert's village resort is in a very rural area of New York. It is an understatement to say that the place is not developed as all the facilities such as electricity, proper roadways, water, telephone etc. are available. The difference is that the place does not have many houses, shops, or a large number of storied-buildings and vehicles. It is a very peaceful, beautiful place. For miles across, the jungle and mountains are visible.

The house is surrounded by about 90 acres of land. From time to time the house has been repaired. I slept in Andy's room. Next to mine there are two rooms occupied by Rebecca and her friend and Mert and Abby. From 12 noon today Dr. James Yen and other visitors will arrive.

Neetha and I at Abby and Mert's Country home

I am due to deliver a speech. Aid is collected for the International Village Development Institute and Sarvodaya. In lieu of birthday gifts money is collected.

Visitors started arriving. Dr. James Yen, his daughter, his granddaughter and the party arrived at 12 noon. Everyone brought their food and food to be shared with others. There are two large tents put up with white and yellow roofing. Many people are seen swimming in the pond right in front of the house. Most of the people at the party are known to me. Douglas Gunawardene, his son in law and a gentleman named Bernard too were seen at the party. After everyone had lunch, the meeting started at about 1.00 p.m. Mert Mason spoke first welcoming everyone present. Andy Mason read out a letter from Doris in Indonesia. The next speech was mine which was impromptu, about Dr. James Yen and Mason family to be followed by a description about Sarvodaya, world peace and development. Everyone applauded and there was incessant clapping which made me feel that what I said was well received.

When Dr. James Yen himself spoke, the audience appeared to forget that the speaker was 96 years old. He spoke about his life experiences for about one hour. There was friendly chatting till about 9.00 p.m. and after a tired day we went to sleep.

with Abby and Andy

Andy, Mert, Abby and Jane remained with me. They cleaned and arranged the place and packed the items to be taken back. We reached home around 8.00 p.m the next day. I telephoned Neetha, and Jacalyn.

Glen telephoned me and mentioned that Jacalyn and himself would be visiting Sri Lanka in January and they hoped to start some income generating village projects and that they are moving forward with their business ventures that are prospering well. I spent the morning getting ready for my return journey home. Ending my stay with Mert and Abby, I bade farewell to Abby and with Mert left to the airport. These two I am sure would have been my family members in a past birth. I rested in the business class lounge to board the KLM aircraft which was due to leave at 5.45 p.m. This was JFK airport.

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ARKANSAS COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Arkansas Conference is an international programme aimed at training community leaders. The training centre is situated about 60 miles away in the State of Arkansas at the Winthrop Rockerfeller Foundation. From Washington Airport Andy and I went to the small town called Memphris (1427 population), had lunch and after a few hours reached the training centre. Memphris is populated with black people. The Chairman of the county belonged to black nationality, a man reaching maturity with age, equally mature in intelligence. This area does not portray the American development displayed to the world. Under the leadership of the County Chairman we were able to see the efforts made towards the improvement of water supply schemes, renovation of houses, construction of new houses and construction of bridges.

The Conference was sponsored by Arkansas Community Development Foundation, Ending Hunger Project, Oxfam America, Save the Children and individual donors.

This project was first launched by Nathan Gray of Oxfam America. He is a young married man in his thirties. He is thin and tall; his hair combed to a side and is always with a smiling face. Having realized the importance of community level leadership to effect a change relating to peace and justice, he had first discussed the idea with Dena Meadows who authored the book 'Limitations of Economic Development' for the Club of Rome. Nathan Gray had earlier heard about a few participants of the Conference, including myself. Dena Meadows and Nathan Gray started organizing the project over a period of one year during which time, Mary King, who played an important role in the Civil Rights Movement and who became the Director of Peace Corp, also joined them. These three became the Organizing Board of the project and worked tirelessly for 2 ½ years to obtain support from organizations and individuals. Oxfam later withdrew from the project which was unfortunate.

There were 17 of us from abroad participating in the Conference and 15 from America. The representatives I met from Bangladesh are my friends even now.

One such friend is Fazrul Hassan Abed. I met the first Prime Minister of Bangladesh which I consider as an important event in my life. Abed, lean and short, is about 42 years and a relative of the present President of Bangladesh. He does not use this powerful connection. Abed's parents sent him to England for education and he was granted the U.K. citizenship. He is a student of the London School of Economics and was employed at the Geneva Branch of the Shell Company as an accountant. His wife is Marietta. He possesses a Diploma from MacMaster University, Canada. In 1969 he was a high ranking official of the Shell Company which eventually allowed him to secure a place in its Chitagong Office in Bangladesh.

He was greatly shocked at the disaster caused by the tornado on November 1970 for which between 300,000 and 500,000 Bangladeshis lost their lives. The untold suffering of the people and their struggle for liberation made Abed resign from the Shell Company and form a village action committee named BRAC-

Bangladesh Rural Action Committee. This Committee initially worked on a small scale limiting its activities. Later was able to receive membership from about 200 villages involving on integrated village development activities. He was able to get foreign aid and very efficiently worked towards economic development.

Though his efforts were not weighted towards spiritual awakening, he selected the landless, employed about 1,500 M. A degree holders with himself giving leadership to a massive Movement. About four years back he received the Ramon Magsaysay Award. That is my friend Abed.

The main aim of the Conference was directed at identifying problems connected with children, health, education, agriculture and similar subjects; applying the knowledge gained from the community leadership training programme; arrive at solutions and working towards steady development. The ultimate goal was to eradicate poverty through this process. The programme agenda was prepared with a view to form a web of the community leaders worldwide; strengthen interaction among them and to realize their anticipated goals.

Arkansas is a very poor American State. It was expected that this project would bring assistance to people in Arkansas towards solving their problems. Although a small quantity of agricultural products that they manufacture are exported, the people fall into the low income group. An idea which floated in the minds of everyone was that this project will see an end to the sufferings of the poor.

Details of the project were given wide publicity in Arkansas Times and other main newspapers in America. Some named it 'The Conference of the Poor'. The organizer of the event stated, "I can see Gandhis here- what I mean is that some participants possess Gandhian qualities."

I was scheduled to deliver the keynote address which I did appropriately, under the title 'Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement and Village Development'. Later in the day Governor Bill Clinton, who became the President of U.S.A and Andrew Young addressed the Conference. It was a full three week conference. We were taken on a tour covering Winrock International Veterinary Research Training Centre, Development projects, City Development Institute of New York and the cities-Boston, Washington, Dallas and Houston. It was an experience of a varied nature, talking to people, participating in workshops and exchanging ideas.

While I was in Boston I had the opportunity to meet Oxfam Director Dr. Joe Short, and Michael Scott. After lunch in the evening on invitation by Ruth and Henry Morganthau, I visited them. I slept after dinner. Ruth Morganthau took me to the airport and requested Nathan Gray to attend to my needs. Nathan and I boarded a Delta aircraft, flew to Atlanta and from there to Littlerock. The entire journey took us about 3 ½ hours.

I spent two nights at Littlerock in the beautiful residence of Frank and Jean Morgan. They are a kind couple. The house was built out of rock in harmony with nature. The 17 of us from various countries and the 15 persons from America met again in Littlerock for a small conference organized by Nathan Gray, Dena Meadows, Mary King and Tom MacRay- the President of Windorf Institute. Along with the rest of the party I participated in television and media (newspaper) discussions.

The final two days I spent in North America was of special interest. Programmes were organized by Lagoon area Buddhist Peace Brotherhood and Lagoon area Dharma Foundation. Jamy and Jane together with Joana Macy played a leading role in organizing the events. Jamy and Jane are Buddhists, a couple who had visited Sarvodaya and Dr. Joana Macy, who is a Buddhist, spent one year at Sarvodaya and authored the book 'Dharma and Development'. The foolish behaviour of some officers attached to the Emigration and Immigration Department brought shame during the last two weeks of her stay in Sri Lanka. The mistake was corrected after an appeal to the President. During my stay in America, it was Jamy and Jane who invited me to San Francisco. While I was in America Joana's book received very good sales.

During these two days I was able to attend a number of very important functions. My lecture last night was delivered at the Unitarian Church, with the audience consisting of more than 300 people. My friends of a long time, Richard Hendrickson of Asia Foundation with his wife, and Shirley Mahel 'Nangi' were also there. Shirley's mother met me the previous day and donated USD 500 which I used for developing a village in Matara district. At the end of my lecture many people were eager to form Sarvodaya Shramadana Societies in the lagoon area.

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FIVE STAGE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS FOR THE DISASTER-RIDDEN

After the Black July of 1983 the general public was subject to terrorist attacks almost daily. This situation compelled me to devise a special plan of action for which I obtained the approval of the Executive Council. We named this newly formed Unit the '5R Section'. The Five Stage (5R) programme comprises, (1) Relief work immediately necessary for the people affected by disaster, as the First R; (2) the Rehabilitation of the affected people, with their participation, so that they can reconstruct their lives both physically and mentally and live with self-dignity, as the Second R; (3) the Reconciliation process which starts with a common programme of relief and rehabilitation for all without any distinctions, as the Third R; (4) the Reconstruction of houses, schools, community centres, tanks, irrigation systems, water supply schemes, health facilities and all such infrastructure facilities in accordance with state plans, as the Fourth R; and, (5) a Re-awakening process through which such innocent people could be transformed into communities which attain the status of Grama Swarajya Villages, through participating in psycho-social and spiritual programmes, as the Fifth R. The 5R programme was one of the most successful.

We implemented the 5R programme in the North through Sarvodaya District Centres in Kilinochchi, Jaffna, Mannar and Vavuniya and in the East through the district centres in Trincomalee, Kantale, Batticaloa, Kalmunai and Ampara. UNHCR, Oxfam (U.K), Care International, UNICEF, WUSC, NORAD, Refugee Council of

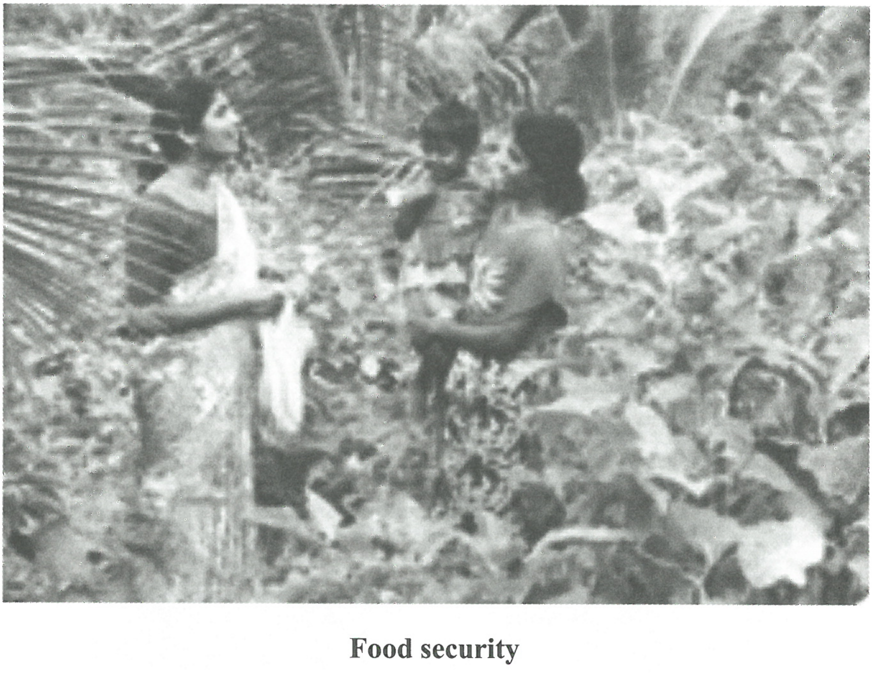
Denmark, Save the Children (U.K), CIDA, USAID, HELVETAS, ILO, One World One People (Japan), Nigata Api Nokai (Japan), RKK (Japan), FAO, AUSAID and the Japanese government liberally supported Sarvodaya towards the successful implementation of this programme.

Among the effectively implemented programmes the following take the lead.

- Providing food, clothing, housing and kitchen utensils
- Strengthening communities
- Providing education for children
- Assisting the education of the mentally retarded
- Providing vocational training
- Providing infrastructure facilities such as roads, wells and tanks
- Providing community health facilities

Constructing houses

- Housing and food security
- Re-construction of water schemes, health facilities, agricultural schemes, irrigation schemes and re-building of schools and roadways
- Enterprise development and loan facilities
- Educating the public regarding landmines
- Special aid for widows and those affected by land mines
- Creating awareness among the public on child rights



Food security

Building Wells

Distributing food items

Pre School Education

Plantation by the Pre School Children

The Tsunami disaster on December, 2004 was one of the best opportunities to implement this 5R Programme.

Though the Tsunami struck Sri Lanka on a holiday, within a few hours of the unfortunate event, a small Operations Unit was set up at Sarvodaya Headquarters and all the district centres were contacted through telephone and a general idea of the damage caused was gathered. We were able to select, from the affected villages in the Southern, Eastern and Northern Provinces, 223 villages connected with Sarvodaya. They were spread across eight districts. Within a very short period we were able to know the districts that were not affected and we issued instructions to our workers that they collect whatever the relief items and 25 volunteers from each district should encamp in the 223 selected villages and start relief activities. Before the end of the first day of tsunami, our volunteers collected food items, medicines, clothing etc. and camped in these 223 villages.

We used the Internet to let people know about Sarvodaya services. Small donations received from all over the world were used, to provide a massive service. We not only constructed pre-schools, schools, community centres, Sarvodaya financial centres, housing schemes, and cleaned old wells that provided drinking water, but also constructed latrines and other sanitation services needed.

Sarvodaya completed a housing scheme at Lagoswatte in Kalutara district. This Sarvodaya model village at Lagoswatte was named 'Damniyamgama'. For four years Sarvodaya carried out the 5R programme in many parts of the country including the North and the East.

Water

A much worse situation than with the Tsunami arose with the refugee flow of approximately 300,000 persons to Vavuniya district, after the humanitarian operation to redeem the North and the East from terrorists was completed. Government introduced many steps towards providing relief and rehabilitation to the refugees and was the main service provider. Sarvodaya to date provides assistance through its 5R programme.

There is no doubt that the government and other organizations have emulated this 5R programme. The best evidence for this is that the 5R terminology we introduced is currently being used by all of them.

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THE DEVASTATION FROM WAR IS NO SOLACE SERVICES FOR THE NORTHERN PEOPLE

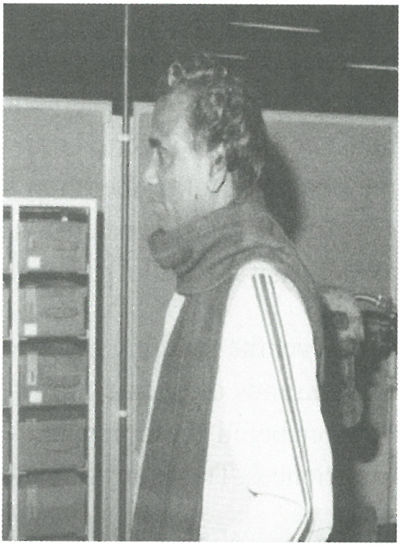
From mid 1980s the lifestyles of the people in the North and the East of Sri Lanka were torn asunder owing to the war. Different sections of society gave various connotations to this situation. Some said it was racial conflicts converted into war; some were of opinion that it was the beginning of a liberation struggle; some others viewed it as an effort to clamp down terrorism; yet another section of the society explained it as parallel government terrorism.

Whatever the meaning given to the war, it has not brought any solace to thousands of people in the North and East. With the war greater disaster befell these people. It is a collection of sad and traumatic experiences. This is anyway the true face of any war.

Neetha and I with Northen Sarvodaya Workers

The situation of hundreds and thousands of the civil population who lost their homes and became refugees is more than a sad story.

The only national voluntary organization functioning in the North and the East to help the people afflicted with disaster from war is Sarvodaya. Sarvodaya volunteers in the North are fully trained to handle national disasters such as war and this volunteer force took immediate action by providing the essential items for survival to their brethren, arranging temporary housing facilities, treating the sick, taking the sick that needed urgent medical attention to hospital and rendering appropriate assistance. It is in my memory still, how Reuter, while providing news about war through electronic media, appreciated Sarvodaya efforts.



Mr. Thirunavakarsu

By this time, Jaffna peninsula was one of the most heavily populated districts in Sri Lanka. It consisted of eleven electoral divisions with a population of over 904,552 majority of whom were Tamils. There were a few Sinhala and Muslim families as well. The main source of income is from agriculture and fishing industry while a fair number of persons are engaged in cottage industries.

(According to the statistics of Jaffna district then and available with us at present, there were 23,000 families dependent on fishing for a

With Mr. Thirunavakarsu

livelihood, 38,528 on agriculture and 8,000 producing *beedi* (untreated tobacco leaf ready for smoking). In the year 1984 when the government declared Jaffna district as a security zone, the usual livelihood patterns of the residents in Jaffna got disrupted and they were made to suffer many hardships.

Sarvodaya had its Jaffna district centre at Premises No. 22, Rasavithottam Road, which belonged to Dr. Vettiveli. Mr. K. Thirunavakarsu functioned as the District Coordinator for Jaffna. I remember Mr. Thirunavakarsu as a devoted Hindu, most respectful of Sarvodaya and me personally. I also remember the occasion when he wrote to me a very lengthy letter making a confession regarding a shortcoming of his and imploring forgiveness. My reply was of a consoling nature, explaining that to err is human and mistakes of the past should be treated as lessons for future and it should be ensured that repetition does not occur.

I was aware that having studied meditation techniques from the books which were made available to him by me he practiced meditation and also that to obtain the blessings of the Hindu religious deities, he along with other Sarvodaya persons, practiced walking meditation, every morning and evening, around our Sarvodaya centre.

During this period no organization gave Sarvodaya any monetary assistance to carry out development work in the North. Money needed to maintain the staff and to continue with the development projects in the North was gifted from the Sarvodaya common account.

A team of representatives from Helvetas visited Sarvodaya and submitted a proposal for joint activities with Sarvodaya. Mr. Werner Kulin, the Executive Director of Helvetas was a representative of this team. I selected Punguduthivu in Jaffna, Kerathivu, Kilinochchi and some other places for the implementation of their projects in construction of houses and water supply schemes. Helvetas was responsible for buildings and farms found today in these places. Thirunavakarusu *malli* was in charge of all these projects.

After the communal riots in 1983 *Thiru Malli* stopped his visits to Sarvodaya headquarters. I met him during my visits to Jaffna and explained to him the importance of facing the unfortunate situation with a positive attitude. He was working as an independent body and to our surprise had wished to work with Helvetas directly. This proposal was rejected by Helvetas.

He had proposed that all the activities of Sarvodaya in Kilinochchi be done independent of Sarvodaya administration and such activities be handed over to his organization. Needless to say that this proposal was a shock to us. *Thiru Malli* had no such intention earlier. He was most respectful of Sarvodaya principles and its activities and was an active member. Sarvodaya spent large amounts of money to build the 13 acre farm for the benefit of the people in the North. It was indeed very sad and shocking that he wanted the management of this farm.

**Dr. Sjy Themais and Dutch Friends
Visiting an Agricultural Well**

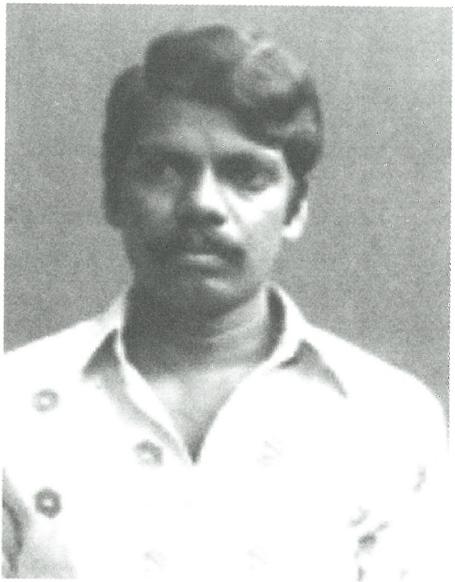
Most of the properties in the North that Sarvodaya owned by spending much money was forcefully occupied by groups of terrorists who opposed Sarvodaya. Violence was rampant in the North during this era. When I received news of this nature I used to say, “Let them be. When things reach normalcy we shall get together with the people and start our work.” But when I received the letter stating that *Thiru Malli* would be handling all administrative work directly with Helvetas, we were nonplussed.

We also had the justifiable doubt whether *Thiru Malli* was acting under threat from an opposing force of Sarvodaya.

We suggested that he visit Sarvodaya Headquarters and discuss matters. Not only did he turn a deaf ear, but refrained from visiting

Sarvodaya for three years. By this time we were receiving news of unpalatable nature about him from our friends in Jaffna.

It came to our knowledge that he had formed an organization completely against the principles of Sarvodaya and had taken under his wing the programmes of Sarvodaya. He had once sent a letter (copy sent to us by a person attached to his organization) to Red Barna accusing Sarvodaya of malpractices.


Mr K. Kadiramalai

Although things were taking such a turn we believed that after discussing the issues in question, it would be possible to get him back on the right track. With this hope in mind we repeatedly requested him to visit us at Sarvodaya Headquarters. His arrogance created pain and sadness in us. Finally we decided to terminate his services with Sarvodaya and informed him in writing of this decision. We also informed the government and the relevant organizations about our decision stating that Sarvodaya would not be responsible for any of Mr. Thirnavukarasu's dealings.

Effective from 1st December 1985 Mr. K. Kadiramalai was appointed as the District Coordinator of Jaffna. In addition he was given the task

Maniam Malli (Left) in front of our Jaffna Office

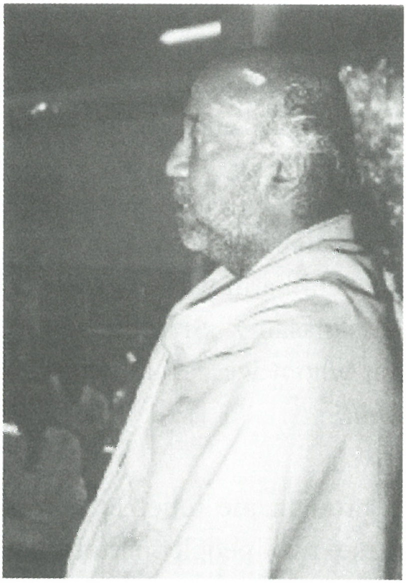
of overseeing the Sarvodaya activities in Jaffna, Mulaitivu, Kilinochchi and Vavuniya as Field Director.

Administration of the Kilinochchi Farm was entrusted to Krishnasamy Sivasubramaniam whom we call as *Maniam Malli*.

It brought me relief to notice these two people performing their duties with enthusiasm and efficiency.

Whenever I visited Jaffna, even during the LTTE control peiod I spoke to *Thiru Malli* and tried to build goodwill. By this time the situation in Jaffna was becoming war- ridden.

The worst affected were the very poor families of the North. There was no hope for the disabled; no way of education for the students; no work for the youth. In hundreds and thousands families were scattered all over. Assistance these people received from Sarvodaya gave them strength of purpose to carry on. Sarvodaya Centre at Punguduthivu was totally set aside for rehabilitation activities. Sarvodaya volunteers cleared the crown land in Jeyapuram, dug wells and constructed temporary dwelling places. Refugees from Kerativu were given transport to Jeyapuram, Sarvodaya bearing the expenses.



Mr. S. K. Welaudapille

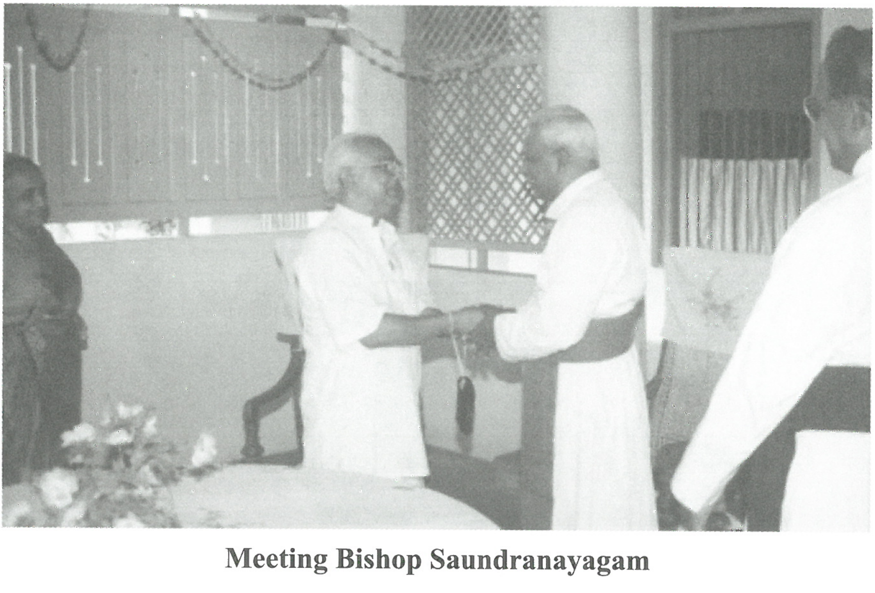
Chairman of Velvetithurai People's Committee, Professor Sinnathamby gave us assistance. It is recorded here with appreciation the assistance provided by him, understanding the Sarvodaya philosophy well and without paying heed to outside forces; fearlessly he continued supporting Sarvodaya efforts. During this time, I received a letter praising our efforts from three honourable citizens of Jaffna. To quote a few sentences from the letter, "we watched your workers distributing food and clothing to the helpless people. It is a humane, praiseworthy and a noble deed - a service. We wish Sarvodaya, headed by you, great success, and may all your hopes be realized."

With Sarvodaya Workers at Jaffna Sarvodaya Headquarters

with Sarvodaya Workers at Jaffna Sarvodaya Headquarters

Visiting Jaffna Hospital

Visiting Jaffna Hospital



Meeting Bishop Saundranayagam

Visiting Pre - Schools

Visiting a Church with Dr. Jehan Perera

The letter was signed by the principal of Thelippalai Nadeswara College, Bank Manager D. Chelliah and engineer E.A. Mariapillai. They were community leaders as well.

While we were conducting activities in the Jaffna district in a very satisfactory manner, a very sorrowful event, not even dreamt of, took place. That is the assassination of our Field Director *Kadiramalai Malli* by an armed group. (Details are in the 2nd Volume of Bhava Thanha).

Needless to say that my disappointment was great to see the distancing of cooperation which existed between Sarvodaya headquarters and the Jaffna District Centre after Kadiramalai was assassinated. At the same time, some people from the EROS visited Jaffna District Centre and removed some documents and books of accounts.

After the demise of *Kadiramalai Malli, Sivasubramaniam Malli* was appointed the Jaffna District Coordinator. Within a short period, it appeared that he was able to revive the activities by putting in much effort and efficiency. He continued the rehabilitation and other services, enlisted the cooperation of the people from the area and provided an unbroken service. Sarvodaya selected 103 villages from Jaffna district and started a nutrition programme where milk food was supplied to the children from very poor families.

These poor people had no one to turn to but voiced their grievances to gods. In such a situation they considered it a miracle bestowed upon them from above. Encouraged by the response received, we prepared a project aimed at distributing milk food to another 200 villages and submitted the proposal to Mr. Austin Fernando, the Secretary of the Rehabilitation Ministry.

Unfortunately, *Sabapathi Malli* who was in charge of the Kilinochchi Kanakambiyahikulam and Thedumkulam farms died in a motor accident.

However much good one does, trouble comes in a row. This is a truth I have experienced. I was ill and had to undergo a minor surgery. There was no end to the troubles from Thirunawukarasu *Malli.* He had begun an exercise where letters containing false accusations against me were sent to many organizations and individuals. One such letter he had sent to Mr. Mutthaih an active member in the North was sent to me by someone. I have known Mutthaih for a long time and I am aware he had understood well the principles that I valued. I know he would not believe the false allegations.

On another occasion when we tried to settle the electricity bills of the Talaimannar Sarvodaya Centre, a letter containing falsehoods about the ownership of the property was sent to the Engineer in charge and he started harassing us. Later the engineer made enquiries and warned the person who sent him the letter. Immediately after the death of Kadiramalai *Malli,* Seelan, a brother of Jayarani *Nangi,* an active member of the Jaffna District centre too died. I received a lengthy letter from Jayarani explaining the hard time she was forced to undergo.

Whenever there were troubled situations, I faced them with equanimity, provided material help and advice where necessary. I ensured the continuity of the services which we were providing to Jaffna people.

It was during this period that I received a letter from the Government Agent, Kilinochchi about the dilapidated state of the buildings in the 100 acre land allocated to 100 refugee families who were living in these houses. He requested in his letter that I get new houses constructed. These are the people who were affected by 1983 riots. Not only were we able to construct 50 houses but we were also able to provide drinking water by constructing 50 wells. All these services were possible through the dedicated work of our volunteers.

Large numbers of refugees in the North started leaving Sri Lanka to reside in India during this time. This was a disorganized haphazard activity. Government of Sri Lanka and the leaders in India requested Sarvodaya's assistance to introduce a systematic procedure which would facilitate smooth travel arrangements and avoid unwarranted happenings. Acceding to this request I made arrangements for this activity to be carried out smoothly from Sarvodaya district centre at Talaimannar. Later, K. Thilakaratnam *Malli,* Sarvodaya District Coordinator attached to Talaimanar functioned as the coordinator of this activity.

During this period the army too made matters worse for the people of Jaffna. Frequent curfews, surprise visits to houses for checking and other forms of military activity brought in great stress to the people. The situation is explained in the reports of independent surveys conducted by Sarvodaya. One such report submitted to me had stated that 1,250 had died owing to war, 2,650 had lost their dwellings and property and 3,000 families had no kitchen utensils.

It was also mentioned that most of these atrocities were committed by the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF).

Surprisingly, I received a letter from a high government official working in the North, giving details about the situation in Jaffna that the people were suffering due to want of food and for Sarvodaya to step in and provide food. The letter also mentioned that Sarvodaya personnel have been given special permission to enter the security area and they can move about during 24 hours of the day after establishing their identity.

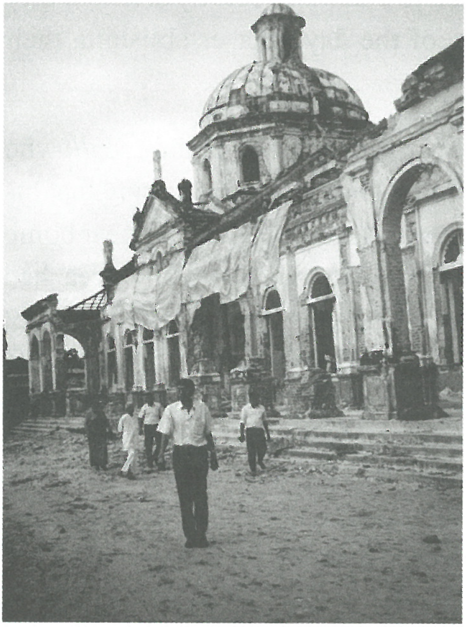
In the meantime, I received a letter from Sivasubramaniam *Malli* who was in charge of the Sarvodaya Jaffna District Centre stating that his lonely life was in danger as well. It was the usual pattern to hear bomb explosions and sounds of gun shots that people in the area had abandoned their dwelling houses. As telephone service too was not functioning it was not possible to contact anyone which made his life unbearably lonely.

These messages made me understand the gravity of the situation. While the general public faced this dangerous situation the government servants were not spared. There was no time to lose.

I made arrangements to send the necessary food items to Jaffna as a first step. Rice, flour, dhal, tea leaves, condiments and tin food were sent to Jaffna in 18 lorries.

Young Harsha Navaratne was the Director in charge. He possessed fine skills in organizing such events. The entire operation was a great success owing to the yeoman service Harsha rendered carrying out my instructions to the letter. It was well performed quick work.

No sooner the lorries reached Jaffna; our trained young volunteers combed every nook and corner in Jaffna, in search of the helpless people and acted with dedication to distribute the food items. Although a number of non government organizations were active our services took the lead as our workers without any shortcomings or problems performed their duties.


Damage done During War

During this time the honorable citizens in Jaffna started sending me messages of good will and the foreign media gave publicity praising and appreciating our efforts. We were able to distribute at least 1000 food parcels daily to the refugees. I visited Jaffna spoke to many people about their needs. I was informed that about 72,000 displaced persons were sheltered in 120 camps. I was able to visit only a few of these camps.

What struck me most during my visits was the acute mal nutrition of the children. This brought great pain of mind. I immediately made arrangements to send milk food for children along with other items.

On my visit to Jaffna I found that Jaffna was under curfew and people were made to suffer tremendously. As electricity had been temporarily disconnected in the entire Jaffna district, refugees needed kerosene oil. Similar to the difficulty in obtaining food items, they found it very difficult to obtain kerosene oil as well. I arranged a scheme for these people to get a rationed quantity of kerosene for each family. Sarvodaya issued cards and continued supply of kerosene oil was ensured.

Visit to Jaffna

Almost everyone extended support to Sarvodaya. Sarvodaya received cooperation from the armed forces and the young rebels as well. It was an added strength to us.

Sarvodaya's activities are always guided by Buddhist doctrine. In this instance it was *Dukkappatthaca niddukka bayappatthaca nibbaya,* meaning, 'may people who are suffering overcome their suffering, may people burdened with fear get rid of fear', found in Dhammapada. Not paying heed to race, religion, caste and other barriers, Sarvodaya went in search of people afflicted with sorrow and

Damaged area

fear and brought solace to their lives. We performed all these with detachment and love. Not only did we provide our brethren food to sustain physical self, but also, a roof above their heads, clothing, medicine for the sick, and above all, extended benevolent thoughts of love, kindness and compassion to bring peace to their hearts and minds.

During this period Sarvodaya spent Rs. 98,000,000/ approximately for the well being of the people in the North.

One does not find the North in a sad situation today. We are happy. We treated war with contempt then. We do the same today. Our only hope was the building of good will among nationalities. This is achieved to some extent today. We are happy.

Serving the population in Jaffna then, we were blessed with altruistic joy. Happiness that prevailed within us then, remains to date.

Thiru spent his last years leading a spiritual life which coincided with social service. Thiru *Malli* had visited Colombo in 2001 after many years and had expressed the wish to visit Sarvodaya and meet me, the reason being his desire to work with us again. Unfortunately, before

Damaged Library

at Sarvodaya Office

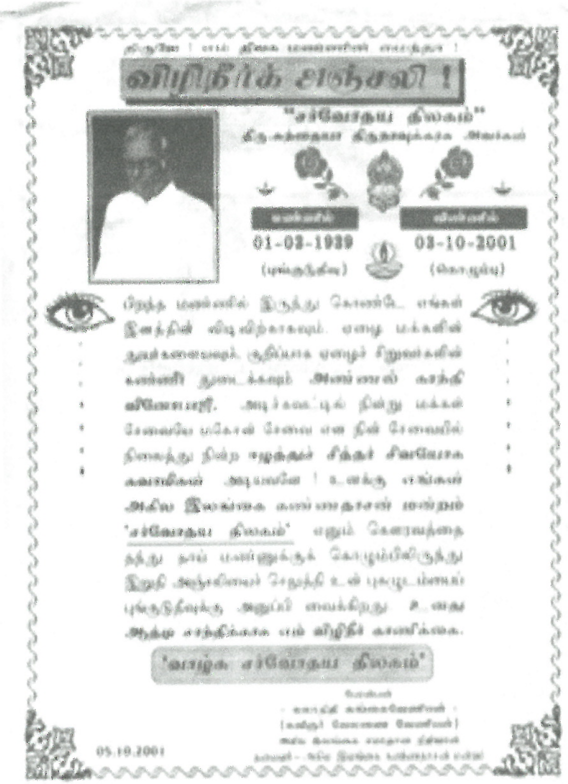
any medical attention was given he finally collapsed on 3rd October 2001 in Colombo.

We paid our last respects to him at the Jayaratne Funeral Parlour and delivered an oration of respect.

His body was cremated at Punguduthivu in Jaffna.

We sent a letter of condolence to his mother and sister.

Nothing in this world lasts forever.



விழிநீர் அஞ்சலி !

"சர்வோதய திலகம்"

01-03-1939

03-10-2001

'வாழ்க சர்வோதய திலகம்'

05.10.2001

Death Notice

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SARVODAYA TRUST FUND

The Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation for Community Leadership had selected me for their award in 1969. I donated the total prize money amounting to U.S $ 10,000 to Sarvodaya at a function held at Temple Trees under the patronage of the Prime Minister Mr. Dudley Senanayake. Mr. M.W. Karunananda, the then President of Sarvodaya, accepted the donation on behalf of Sarvodaya.

During that period "Development Education" was a phrase which was hardly known. I requested the Sarvodaya Executive Council to utilize this money to train young men and women selected from Sarvodaya Villages. Development Education Institutes which began with Meth Medura and a few other places, have now spread countrywide. They have been developed into institutes providing higher education and are being sustained as such.

The next Award I received was in 1982, the King Boudwin Award for International Development, established to mark the completion of 25 years of the reign of His Majesty King Boudwin of Belgium. I decided to donate this money, to be given as Awards to Sri Lankans who have in large measure contributed towards Humanity, Development and Peace. Accordingly, Mr. D.P.G. Mahadivulwewa, Attorney-at-Law and Notary Public, who was working closely with Sarvodaya prepared and attested a Trust Deed for this purpose on 4th March, 1983, with the Members of the Board of Trustees being, Mr. M.W. Karunananda, Mr. B.A.D. Gunasinghe, Mrs. Seetha Virginia Rajasuriya, Mr. William Kandage, Professor Nandasena Ratnapala, Dr. P. Amerasinghe, Mr. Sathis de Mel, Attorney-at-law Mr. Walter Peris and myself. Approximately, Rs 6.7 million was donated to this Fund, prohibiting withdrawal from the capital. The Awards are given from the annual interest.

The Trust Fund became a legal entity on 25th July, 1984 under the Parliamentary Act No. 31 of 1984.

The 1st Award ceremony was held in 1993. Since then, and until the publication of this volume, Award Ceremonies have been held presided over by distinguished persons.

On account of filling the vacancies arising from the death or resignation of members, the current Board members include Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne, Mr. D. A. Perera, Mr. Dharma Gunasinghe, Attorney-at Law Mr. Walter Peris, Attorney-at-Law Mr. Shevon Gunratne, Dr.Vinya S. Ariyaratne, Mr. Amaradasa Gunawardena, Mr. K. L. Gunawardena and Mr. Subasena de Silva. Mr. Dharma Gunasinghe who was at school with me, becoming a good and very trusted friend of mine and who later became the Principal of Nalanda College, functions as the Executive Director of the Trust.

I derive a great deal of pleasure from being able to give recognition to and make awards to those who have served the country, its people and promoted its culture; assist economically deprived children to pursue their higher education; and assist some of the poorest of the poor.

List of names of the recipients of the Award appears below.

1993 – Inaugural Award Ceremony Recipients

1. Ven. Seruwila Saranakitthi Nayake Thero
2. Ven. Kuppiyawatte Bodananda Thero
3. Rev. Fr. Tissa Balasuriya
4. Professor Ediriweera Saratthchandra
5. Ms. Thangamma Appakutti
6. Dr. Douglas Walathara
7. Mr Bandula Liyanage
8. Ms. Sunethra Weerasinghe
9. Dr. H. M. D. Heart

1994 Recipients

1. Mr. H. D. Sugathapala
2. Mr. Edwin Ariyadasa
3. Mr. Madawala S. Ratnayake
4. Dr. J. C. E. Moonamale

1995 Recipients

1. Ven. Panwila Vipassi Thero
2. Professor A. D.V. de S. Indraratne
3. Mr. Lucian Rajakarunanayake
4. Ms. Sybil Wetthasinghe
5. Dr. Pandit W. D. Amaradeva
6. Mr. Sirisumana Godage

1996 Recipients

1. Ven. Maduluwawe Sobitha Nayake Thero
2. Professor J. B. Dissanayake
3. Deshabandu Mr. Albert Edirisinghe
4. Professor Swarna Jayaweera
5. Media Advisor Mr. H. M. Gunasekera

1997 Recipients

1. Kalashuri Rt. Rev. Fr. Mercelene Jayakody
2. Deshamanya Professor Nandadasa Kodagoda
3. Kalashuri Ms. Irangani Roksana Serasinghe
4. Kalashuri Dr. Chitrachari Panibharatha
5. Ms. Rene Thilakawathi Peiris

1998 Recipients

1. Ven. Madhihe Pannasiha Mahanayake Thero
2. Mr. Bogoda Premaratne
3. Dr. A. N. S. Kulasinghe
4. Mr. Tissa Abeysekera
5. Sri Lanka Sumithrayo

1999 Recipients withThe Board of Trustees

1. Dr. Wimala de Silva
2. Dr. C. G. Uragoda
3. Dr. Ms. Shrimathi Lorna Devarajah
4. Dr. Godfrey Gunatilake
5. Dr. Hudson Silva
6. Visharadha Nanda Malani

2000 Recipients

1. Ven. Dr. Mapalagama Wipulasara Nayake Thero
2. Dr. Lester James Peiris
3. Mr. Henry Jayasena
4. Dr. P. R. W. Godakumbura
5. Dr. Chandrasiri Weliwatte

2001 Recipients with The Board of Trustees

1. Ven. Dr. Welimitiyawe Shri Kusaladhamma Nayake Thero
2. Rev. Fr. Dr. Mervyn Fernando
3. Kalashuri Dr. Chitrasena
4. Kalashuri Titus Thotawatte
5. Deshabandu Ayurveda Dr. Victor Hettigoda

2002 Recipients with The Board of Trustees

1. Pandit William Alwis
2. Ms. Monica Ruwanpathirana
3. Mr. D. L. O. Mendis
4. Mr. Somaweera Senanayake
5. Professor Vinnie Witharana

2003 Recipients with The Board of Trustees

1. Ven. Mahamankadawala Piyaratana Thero
2. Sangeethavedi Mr. Victor Ratnayake
3. Ms. Connie V. Welikala
4. Mr. Dharmasiri Gamage
5. Mr. Thambiyar Perimpanayagam

2004 Recipients with Chief Guest

1. Ven. Harispattuwe Ariyawanshalankara Thero
2. Mr. W. V. Abeygunawardena
3. Mr. Sunil Sarath Perera
4. Ms. Rajina Selvanayagam

SARVODAYA TRUST FUND-ANNUAL AWARD CEREMONY

2005 Recipients, The Board of Trustees and the Guests

1. Professor Mohan Munasinghe
2. Ms. Somalatha Subasinghe
3. Dr. D. V. J. Harischandra
4. Professor V. K. Samaranayake
5. Mr. Cyril Hewawasam

2006 Recipients

1. Ven. Professor Bellanwila Wimalarathana Thero
2. Dr. Leel Gunasekera
3. Mr. Badraji Mahinda Jayatilleke
4. Mr. Gamini Jayasinghe
5. Mr. Namel and Mrs Malani Weeramuni

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SARVODAYA TRUST FUND-ANNUAL AWARD CEREMONY

2007 Recipients

1. Kalashuri Mr. Jayasiri Semage
2. Mr. J. V. Thambar
3. Mr. N. Lanka Jayawardena
4. Professor Sunil Ariyaratne
5. Mr. Rohana Baddege
6. Dr. Upali Pilapitiya

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4. Mr. Sinha Mahendra Amarasuriya
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6. Mr. N. W. E. Wijewantha

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THE SCHUMACHER MEMORIAL LECTURE

Dr. E. F. Schumacher

I visited England to deliver the Dr. E.F. Schumacher Memorial Lecture. On the 12th November 1984, at the Bristol University, amidst a large gathering, I performed my duty quite well. Dr Sathish Kumar, General Secretary of the Schumacher Foundation occupied the chair, while Dr. Schumacher's eldest son Christian delivered the vote of thanks. Mr George Macroby introduced me to the gathering as the number one person living today, who has shown the world the direction it should take in practical terms and spoke about the friendship that existed between the late Dr. E.F. Schumacher and me.

I elaborated on how a no poverty, no affluence, non-violent society could be built following the middle path and how each one of us can contribute towards this end.

Dr. Schumacher who lived in England died suddenly in Switzerland. Following his death the Schumacher Foundation was established, after which annual Schumacher Memorial celebrations were held. A string of lectures were planned to be delivered by a selected group of erudite people whose lectures would cover Dr. Schumacher's aims, concepts and the invaluable service he rendered to humanity. There was a distinct feature on every celebration and the audience usually exceeded 800 people.

As my believes, aspirations and aims were similar to those of Dr. Schumacher and as there was a binding relationship between both of us, the General Secretary of the Schumacher Foundation Mr. Sathish Kumar invited me to deliver a lecture at the following year's memorial celebrations encapsulating the memories connected with Dr. Schumarcar. He was of the view that such a lecture would be of great value.

Dr. Sathish Kumar

Although we were very busy organizing peace walks, I accepted Dr. Sathish Kumar's invitation with pleasure.

The memorial celebrations were held on Saturday 10th November 1984 at the Bristol town. At that time I was busy with much work connected with my foreign travel. After attending a meeting in Tokyo, in the beginning of October, I went to Hawaii, America followed by Canada and as the last lap my schedule was to cover London. One air ticket had to be purchased for the entire journey. Schumacher Foundation was not able to provide me the ticket as they were carefully managing their finances. Through the kind intervention of Mr. S. Jayasekara, KLM airline gifted an air ticket to Schumacher Foundation for my use.

After the lecture in England, if I so wished, Sathish Kumar was to arrange meetings for me with my friends in Europe which he did most efficiently. After the lecture on Saturday, I could wait for one week only in England. My friends there on hearing of my visit wanted to meet me, but I had to curtail the number of meetings and met only a few of my good friends Joana Macy, Bradman Weerakoon and a few others.

'A golden path, illumined and bright for the poor and helpless in the world to enjoy the fruits of no poverty statuses is the introduction Edward Goldsmith gave the audience about me. Along with the books by E. F. Schumacher, there were books written by many famous authors put on exhibition. 'Small is Beautiful' took pride of place.

The main aim of the memorial lectures was to instill into the people's hearts and minds the concepts he formed using the perennial laws of nature for the advancement and betterment of the human being. He expounded that a human being should take the spiritual path for individual development. Dr. Schumacher went into extensive research to find out how people who are filled with thoughts of greed could release themselves from this binding and march upwards towards a positive transformation. Dr. Schumacher introduced valuable perspectives, employing his creative mind, to achieve this objective. Being a humanist of unmatched quality his selfless service to the world cannot be measured. The inherent wisdom, original purity, innately applied by the ancients is no longer visible in mankind, in the areas of economics, architecture, third world development, progress in the industrial world or in any other field. The original purity can be termed as moral law which helps mankind to progress in a congenial manner helping sustenance of wholesome living. Based on this principle, Dr. Schumacher wrote and published many books explaining how human beings could build a society where people respect justice and each other and live in harmony and prosperity. In an introduction relating to Buddhist Economics, he enumerates how Buddhist principles in economics are applied to build a sustainable economy.

'We invite those who are interested in narrowing the gap between spirituality and material comforts to be present at this year's Schumacher Memorial Lectures' was the message contained in the large posters distributed by the organizers of the event.

At 8.00 a.m on the 12th, I addressed a large gathering at Friends House, Euston Road. After the Schumacher lecture I returned to London and as I did at Friends House, I addressed a meeting at the House of Lords. On the 13th Mr Bradman Weerakoon who was working for IPPF met me with some of the IPPF officials.

An unforgettable friend of mine, Mr. Bob Condon was by my side always. Once I suffered a spine disorder and he would not allow me to carry even very light baggage. He looked after me with loving care. Steve and Jan Nation too were my friends who made my stay in England a comfortable one.

It was Mr. George McRobbie who introduced me at the House of Lords lecture. Immediately after this lecture I was due to deliver another one and I was sad that I had no time to leisurely speak with him. On my return to Sri Lanka, I sent him a 'thank you' letter.

I wrote, “That day didn't you praise me? Until I am complete with the wholesomeness that you spoke about, please help me to live and serve. Mahatma Gandhi began the struggle for freedom after the second half of his life, after he was 50 years old. At the expiry of one fourth of life I began my struggle. There is half a century more to carry on. This is the reason I ask you to help me and direct me."

It is no falsehood when I say that my participation in the celebrations of Schumacher Foundation was a special event in my life that cannot be forgotten. As anticipated by the organizers, there was a large gathering. The General Secretary of the Foundation Sathish Kumar and my other friends extended their fullest cooperation. It appeared as if their hearts were bursting with joy and happiness. A letter I received from Sathish a few days later mentioned that my lecture was well accepted by the audience. Resurgence magazine and the third volume of Schumacher Lectures published my lecture. Resurgence had included my name in its 'Thank You' list.

Diana Schumacher, daughter-in-law of Dr. Schumacher, had mentioned in her letter that my lecture was able to awaken the hearts of the audience and she felt that she was specially privileged to have been one of the listeners.

Dr. Schumacher's daughter Christina Schumacher became the President of the Schumacher Foundation in 1985. I was an invitee to all subsequent dinners of the Foundation. I was also invited to be with them whenever I visited England. Christina wrote to me again in 1985 reiterating that my lectures were able to bring in strength of purpose and satisfaction to a wide section of different community groups. The letter also conveyed the grateful appreciation of the Schumacher Foundation members.

21 1 '98

at Schumacher Collage

I mentioned to Mrs. Schumacher and daughter Christina that the close association with them added further value to my friendship with Dr. Schumacher. I also remember writing to them that such warm sentiments can only be expressed in one's mother tongue only!

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BLAZING A PATH FOR THE WORLD'S POOR AND THE POWERLESS TOWARDS A NO-POVERTY SOCIETY

Introduction

I am grateful to the Schumacher Society for this opportunity given to me to deliver the Schumacher Lecture this year. My very special thanks should go to my dear friend Satish Kumar, the Secretary of the Society, who invited me to perform this task in spite of his knowledge about the inadequacy of my academic achievements compared to the high standards already set by the earlier speakers of this lecture series who are people of great intellectual attainment and philosophical eminence. Further I am honoured, and in a sense, inspired by the presence of George McRobie, the life-long friend and co-worker of Dr. Schumacher, who helped him found the Intermediate Technology Development Group and showed to the world that "Small was Possible." While I appreciate the very kind remarks he made when introducing me, I must mention that he is not only a friend close to my heart but also that I consider him as a great teacher who guided me in many ways, to do the small and beautiful things we are doing back in Sri Lanka with the Sarvodaya Movement.

Before I come to the subject I have chosen to speak to you about this evening, namely, 'Blazing a Path for the World's Poor and the Powerless – Towards a No-Poverty Society', I think it is appropriate that I make some remarks about my association with the late Dr. E. F. Schumacher.

I was born and bred in a village in Sri Lanka. As a youth, the more I came in contact with what is now generally known as modern urban life, the more I withdrew almost back into my rural society with its salient Buddhist cultural values. I increasingly believed that life can be meaningful and human fulfillment can be achieved only in small organized communities where social, political and economic life is guided by spiritual, moral and cultural values. Naturally this urge led me to India several times in the late fifties and early sixties to witness how Acharya Vinoba Bhave and Shri Jayaprakash Narayan were translating the Gandhian ideals into concrete action through the Bhoodan Gramdan Movement.

It was during this period I had the good fortune to meet Dr. Schumacher both at the Gandhian Institute of Studies in Varnasi and the Gandhian Peace Foundation in New Delhi. But it was in late seventies when he visited our work in Sri Lanka that we became intimate friends. Subsequently, I visited him in his home in Tentbridge twice with my brother who was living in England at that time.

In February 1976, TOOL, an appropriate technology organization in the Netherlands, was headed by another friend of mine, Ton De Wilde, who is at present the Executive Director of the Appropriate Technology Inernational in Nijmegan in the Netherlands. Dr. Schumacher was invited to deliver the keynote address and I was asked to make the first response to his speech.

It so happened that Dr. Schumarcar's flight from London was delayed and he couldn't make it in time for the opening address. I remember just five minutes before the conference opened he telephoned the

President of the Congress, talked to him first, and then I was called to the telephone. In his inimitable voice he said, "Ari, It is you who will give the keynote address and I will come and respond to what you say." My most vehement protests didn't work and the next minute I was speaking to a packed house of professional scientists and technologists on a subject I hardly knew.

When one's physical life or 'ego' centered intellectual life is in danger, even the self proclaimed materialists are said to search for supernatural powers secretly. For me as a believer in spiritual guidance I should say that I was no exception, because I turned to my teacher, Lord Buddha's teachings for guidance to meet this most difficult challenge that Dr. Schumacher threw at me. My mind flashed back to my childhood and from the Dhamma, the teachings of the Buddha I had learnt at the village temple, I selected few thoughts relevant to economic development and thought aloud how these could be applied in practice in the present world. After all wasn't it Dr. Schumacher's essay on Buddhist Economics that brought world attention to his teachings?

A couple of hours later Dr. Schumacher was there, saw and listened to the video and responded to my remarks in such a manner that his 'heretical' thoughts on economics and technology became an integral part of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement and my own thinking from that day. This is an illustration of how this great thinker and unassuming and committed servant of humanity won our hearts and minds.

I met him last in Vienna at the International Voluntary Service Conference a few months before his untimely demise. He was telling me about declaring the following year “a year of moratorium” from work. As you and I now know he never did that. He couldn't do that. The demand from the world and the urgency within him to deliver his message to humanity was such that he passed away while on his mission in Switzerland in trying to realize some of his ideas in practice.

The choice of the Poor

I will refer only to one idea he expressed in an address he delivered under the title 'A Metaphysical Basis for Decentralization' at the Lindisfarne Conferences.

“……I would suggest that possibilities for any real change, not in the talking but in the doing, can come only from small groups of people. In a sense we don't really need a theory of decentralization. The dinosaurs will collapse under their own weight. Innovating minorities are always small and are de facto decentralized. If any one of us still expect any real help from big powerful organizations, I know he is wasting his time. These organizations are big and powerful precisely because they are not, in this sense, innovating. So the best thing to do is to forget them, or even better, if you are clever enough, to use them as milk cows.”

The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, from whose twenty six year old experience I am speaking to you, is one such innovative effort by small groups of people living in over seven thousand rural communities in Sri Lanka, and several hundred other small groups living in a number of other countries in the world. Sarvodaya Shramadana means Awakening of All through mutual sharing.

In our work we have come across four categories of people according to the life styles they value. Firstly, those who are affluent and powerful and believe wealth and power to be the end purpose of life; secondly, those who aspire to achieve wealth and power in the belief that, that is the way to a fuller life; thirdly, those who have achieved these but are still unhappy and looking for alternative modes of simpler living; and fourthly those who are poor and powerless but are quite satisfied if they are able to attain a No-Poverty Society in which they can live as free human beings within their cultural milieu.

The Sarvodaya Shramadana is a Movement of the poor, by the poor, for the Awakening of All, not excluding the awakening of the people belonging to the above mentioned first three categories. We commence our work with the most deprived in our societies and totally depend on their leadership to initiate the processes that will lead to a post-modern society. As the well-known Gandhian scholar the late Prof. Sugatha Das Gupta mentioned, “Our effort is not to build an alternative society but to proceed from the old society that is from where we are, to a post-modern society in a continuum. We have named this a No-Poverty Society and we propose to by-pass the modern society which we believe is neither sustainable nor possible for all people in the world to attain.”

The main tasks of the Movement as experienced during the last twenty six years are as follows:

- Assist communities to reaffirm their faith in their traditional value systems as far as their relevance to the present day realities of the world are concerned.

- ∗ Strengthen their community participatory systems with appropriate technological skills enabling them to plan out and implement their own felt-need-satisfaction programmes and radically change the mono-cultural suicidal trend in our world.

- ∗ Assist community organizations to get incorporated as legal entities thus enabling them to get the maximum benefits in the realization of their human rights in the economic and political life of the nation.

- ∗ Organize lateral networks of their own independent units at different levels of the administrative system, enabling them to exert an influence on the decision-making processes by concrete examples.

Establish fraternal relationships with organizations and movements with similar objectives for mutual support. We believe that these processes of self-development, thus promoted at the level of the individual, the family, the rural and urban communities the world over, will evolve themselves into a global movement, so decisive that the present mono cultural suicidal trend in our world can be radically changed. I do not think that the present giant transnational organizations, be they political, industrial, commercial, monetary, technological or any other, can be made to act on the realization that a close relationship exists between the way their structures function and the increase in poverty, crimes, armed conflicts, wars, ecological destruction, cultural degeneration and so on going on in our societies. All these organizations seem to be controlled mostly by the first category of people I mentioned. Therefore, there is nothing significant that could be achieved, as Dr. Schumacher rightly said, by appealing to them or placing before them facts and figures which we sometimes think they are unaware of. They know all that much better than we do. They simply have become the prisoners of what the present systems have created in the form of institutionalizing the baser instincts of man such as greed and ill will. When the inherent contradictions in these systems begin to hurt them seriously, only then will they think of the massive suffering that other human beings in the world are going through today. If this painful experience does not come too late for them, basic groups such as Sarvodaya may still be able to join hands with the rest of the humanity to build a more just, sustainable and peaceful society in which they too will be content. If the realization comes too late for them, then we have to allow them to face by themselves the consequences of universal laws of cause and effect. What about the second and third categories of people, namely, those who aspire for affluence and have not yet fulfilled their desires, and those who are already affluent but are dissatisfied with what this has to offer by way of happiness? As far as the Sarvodaya Movement is concerned we try to accommodate them and assist them to change their world view and life styles and, if they are prepared to make the sacrifice, invite them to join hands with us to build by non-violent constructive action a No-Poverty No-Affluence Society. So, the choices before the world and the enlightened poor in particular are very clear. The task of building the post-modern, the post-industrial, new society is clearly the responsibility of the people who are poor and powerless and yet who have the intelligence and insight to realize the barrenness of a consumer-oriented mass-producing and violent society. The poor and the powerless, paradoxically enough, are the least confused and perplexed.

Theory Follows Practice

The Sarvodaya Shramadana effort in Sri Lanka did not begin with a ready-made theory which we had only to practice. The theory came after the practice. It was a long and arduous journey which we braved and still are travelling making as intelligent responses as we possibly could to the challenges we face as we go along.

Firstly, as young teachers and students we wanted to broaden our learning experience by going into the villages where our economically poor, socially depressed and politically ostracized brothers and sisters lived. We combined our learning experience with a service component where we attempted to help improve their living conditions by sharing our labour and other resources that we could find. I remember that there were over two hundred communities at that time who were considered to be 'backward communities' owing to the so-called 'low castes' to which they were born. This was our first area of 'study-service.'

I also remember very vividly how these communities were objects of ridicule and harassment by the so-called high castes. They were also the objects of 'objective detached' sociological study for some foreign and western educated Sri Lankan 'scholars' who wrote books and theses after careful analysis of their so-called caste origins and other matters such as their inter-relationships, but never cared to help these people to be subjects of their own destiny. Last week while in United States I was amused to read a paper recently written by an expatriate Sri Lankan sociologist of this tradition, who had neither visited our Movement nor spoken to us, lamenting over the fact that in a very good book written about Sarvodaya by a famous German 'sociologist' that unfortunately the caste composition of the members of the Movement was not mentioned. As young people we were surprised but awakened to the realities of the times quite early in the Movement when imitators of the west, like this sociologist, not only helped to perpetuate an evil tradition in our society where man ill-treated man but also failed in their duty towards their adopted western societies by not communicating to them the enormous and time-tested good traditions of our culture. When humble people like us tried to revive some of these good traditions these academic Brahmins call us "sentimentalists who try to live in a glorious past."

The bureaucracies of the educational authorities were also closed to us at that time as we were taking education away from the class-room, text books, syllabi and examinations to the 'prohibited' area of the real life of the people. The indifference, ridicule, abuse and even punishments we were subjected to, did not deter us from our determination to serve the poorest of the poor. The study component of our programme was, and is, not for academic purposes. It is to help awaken our personalities to the fullest potential in this life. Whatever knowledge we gain in the process is incidental and helps us to be wiser in life. Such personality awakening takes place only through real life experience. During this first phase of the movement we succeeded in persuading over 350,000 people, mostly youth, to participate in hundreds of shramadana (mutual sharing of labour) camps in all parts of the country where people of diverse ethnic, religious and racial compositions lived. We realized that shramadana was an excellent means to help people to realize respect for all life, engage in compassionate actions to remove causes that lead to suffering, learn to discover the joy of living coming through dispassionate service to fellow beings and development of an attitude of mind where gains and losses, fame and blame are faced with considerate behavior.

Of course other positive benefits such as leadership development, building psychological bridges among people and numerous physical infrastructural activities such as constructing roads, school buildings, community halls, wells, toilets and so on were no less important.

During this ten year period the movement did not receive any local or foreign funding except some random assistance from the sympathizers of the movement. Most contributions were made by villagers themselves by sharing their resources for the common good. Even today the main investment of the movement is labour and services given free to Sarvodaya programmes by thousands of people.

The second phase of the Movement was a community development programme. We began with a hundred selected villages. All aspects of integrated village development were carried out by village people themselves and the Movement brought additional volunteers, training components and whatever other material and monetary inputs it could find from outside the village. It is at this stage; nearly fourteen years after the inception of the Movement, some foreign development co-operation organizations such as OXFAM (U.K) came into support us. Our principal input, however, was still the resources of the people themselves and the efforts put in by the willing hands from outside the village. By the end of 1973 we were working within well over 1,000 villages in our country.

The third phase of the Movement started around this time when we came to realize by practical experience that what was necessary was a total change in our understanding of the development, the strategies and methodologies we were using, not only within the Sarvodaya Movement but also in other governmental and global approaches. We also realized that during our long period of struggle and interactions with both local and foreign development thinkers, practitioners, administrators and our partners; that the path to a more just and peaceful life for our people, whether they are in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe, North America or any other place, should be through an awakening process taking place in thousands of small groups all over the globe. Together, we should start to awaken from the level of the individual person, the family, the village and the urban community. Only then will the nations and the world would awaken.

This awakening should be total, integrating within the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, economic and political life of man and society.

Releasing Processes

Sarvodaya is not offering a mono-cultural formula for all the ills in the world. On the other hand its followers by sheer hard work have released an integrated series of processes in the above manner in over seven thousand village communities- out of 23,000 in Sri Lanka- involving the lives of over two and a half million people. In each village a programme based on self-reliance, community participation and a simple plan decided upon by the people themselves was implemented. From pre-school children, through to school going children, youth, mothers, farmers and other adults, activities are planned and implemented. A village level Sarvodaya Shramadana Society is organized in due course and legally registered with the government. These societies thus have opportunities to engage themselves in economic activities which benefit the village people. Also the innovative and non-violent power of the people as a whole improve the quality of life in the way they want, strengthened by the process of working together in a variety of fields that affect their lives.

The village in its basic needs satisfaction programme needs a variety of trained personnel such as pre-school workers, health care workers, nutrition workers, community shop keepers, savings and credit organizers, rural technical service workers, agricultural promoters and so on. The workers are trained at divisional level, district level and national level development educational centres. There are about 160 such training centres where around 2400 young people are given residential training at a time. It is our aim to establish national and international level training centres at headquarters and at district centres.

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THE HELEN KELLER INTERNATIONAL

The prevalence of blindness, creating stress among children, youth and adults the world over, is a threatening challenge and a health problem. The famous American voluntary organization, Helen Keller International was set up to prevent blindness, bring relief to the incurably blind and provide other ophthalmic services. According to the statistics available from the World Health Organization, during the First World War, the Helen Keller International introduced the Braille system, whereby the blind, the world over, were able to read. This noble deed of the Helen Keller International deserves the highest honour. This organization helped the blind in many ways such as prevention of blindness and eye diseases and promoting the use of vitamin A. With the slogan, "Vitamin A protects both vision and life" it launched nutrition, food and education projects for children.

Only a handful of the blind in the Third World are able to receive a service of this nature. This is the case as not even proper housing and other facilities are adequately available. To overcome this situation the Helen Keller International carried out community-led rehabilitation programmes. It has become possible for an unlimited number of blind people to enjoy their individual freedom, community participation and economic prosperity while living in their own villages. During the period 1986/87 Papua New Guinea, Peru Islands, West Samoa and Sri Lanka conducted programmes at national level. Helen Keller started working with the government of Sri Lanka from 1983. There was quick expansion of Helen Keller services in Europe, South Asia and Africa. At present poor people suffering from eye diseases in the developing countries receive these services. Government and non-government organizations in these countries are provided with ophthalmic support and programmes supporting livelihood.

The primary objective of the Helen Keller International is to train field workers to be strong, sufficiently knowledgeable on conducting eye clinics, treatment and rehabilitation and help solve the problems of a country, within the country. Helen Keller's base is compassion and the purpose is service to mankind for the well being and happiness. It has its headquarters in New York City, America.

The Helen Keller International and Sarvodaya built up their friendship in 1981. Their Programme Officer, Mr. Lawrence F. Campbell visited Sarvodaya and conducted a research on Sarvodaya community development projects, had discussions with the staff and was satisfied. It was the confidence Mr. Campbell had in Sarvodaya that encouraged the Helen Keller International to build a close relationship and join our community development projects. The result was, for the first time in Sri Lanka, the Helen Keller International with Sarvodaya conducted a training programme. Subsequently, Mr. Robert C. Jackle, Director Rehabilitation, the Helen Keller International visited Sri Lanka for the purpose of obtaining details to help Sarvodaya in starting a project to eradicate blindness and introduce eye-care health processes. Training programme had already started when he came to Sri Lanka In 1982 and he was able to give a lecture to the participant students. William Kandage, Arthanayaka, and Seetha Rajasooriya joined the day's function.

At the end of the programme the Helen Keller International collaborated in the first Sarvodaya project aimed at rehabilitating the children with impaired sight in Kalutara, and Colombo South area, with the continuing participation of the nine workers who were trained.

In our first programme, not only the children but also the blind adults with impaired sight were rehabilitated, thus indicating a remarkable progress and success. Thus nearly all those blind people had the privilege of continuing to live on their own village environment, as useful citizens.

Later, Helen Keller International took a step further and under their technical assistance scheme proposed community based projects to be implemented in association with Sarvodaya and the government. Mr. Lawrence visited Sri Lanka again in 1983 to assess the progress of our project and conducted a research relating to the proposed project. He had many discussions with officials of the Health Ministry, Heads of government departments, ministers and members of parliament, after which the required planning for implementation of the community based rehabilitation project was undertaken. These projects are a part of the primary health programmes of the government. The belief of Helen Keller International that Sarvodaya was able to work cordially with the government was an encouragement and strength to us. We accepted with joy the new proposals of the Helen Keller International as they would help the people afflicted with eye problems and relieve them from suffering. In order for the new project, which is a united effort of Sarvodaya, the Helen Keller International and the relevant government departments, to be a success, Mr. Robert Jackle invited me to be the Chairman.

After spending three weeks in Sri Lanka he left with the noble belief of rendering unfailing service. With this in view preliminary planning was done with the help of Dr. Walter Griggs. The survey reports relating to the previous projects of Helen Keller implemented by Sarvodaya were submitted to the Minister of Health who approved them and extended his support. Kurunegala district was selected for the new community based project. Kuliyapitiya and Pannala were recommended for the initial survey. Keerthi Nissankamallawa, district coordinator at the time, K.L. Gunawardena and 14 community workers from Sarvodaya were being involved at the initial stage of the project.

Ms. Susan Eastman from Helen Keller International, New York, America, was responsible for co-coordinating all field activities of the project.

Ms. Susan Eastman

Work connected with the project started at Kuliyapitiya District Centre and Mr. Bobby Jackle participated in the function.

The Helen Keller International established its representative office in Sri Lanka from February 1983, housed at No. 410/85, Bullers Road, Colombo 7. Prevention of blindness, securing primary health care, rehabilitation of and assistance to the blind were the principal aims of the project. For the fulfillment of the project's aims and obtaining good results, developing programmes was given the leading place. Paying special attention to the blind, the reasons for blindness, how eye diseases and blindness affect the individual's health were the main areas emphasized in their proposal.

When the project started in March 1984, Mr. Bobby gave a lecture to the 20 trained field officers and I distributed the certificates and addressed them as, "Please do not go behind money. This is a noble task; perform it with dedication. All civilized societies treat their blind with special privileges. In our country the blind, mentally and physically disabled are cornered. Therefore, we do not belong to a civilized society. Although we are Buddhists, practical Buddhism is not found here. We can earn money and spend it too. Is there any use in this? Can this money bring us fulfillment? There are enough and more things that money cannot bring but service can. If one serves with

Ms. Susan Eastman

honesty, dedication and selflessness, one need not have a big purse to have the needs fulfilled. We are trapped in a commercialized society where money is treated as the most important factor. We have to get out of this trap."

Mr. Lionel Gunatillake who was a participant for the celebrations stated that 'blind' is not the correct word to use, the correct word being 'impairment of sight'. Mr. Gunatillake explained that the aim of the rehabilitation project was to identify the skills of the individuals with impaired sight and encourage them towards taking the proper direction.

It should be stated that this project, which combined community-based development concepts with the shramadana and self-reliance concepts of Sarvodaya and which enabled the blind individual to live with his/her family, establish successful interaction with the community and live a satisfactory life with mutual sharing, was the resounding success. Staff for the rehabilitation work was selected from the trained personel residing in Kurunegala, Pannala and Kuliyapitiya which were the selected areas for the project. Mr Bobby came again and trained the second batch making it possible for the rest of the areas around Kurunegala also to be served. All those who implemented the project were from Sarvodaya. The courage, the manpower and the willingness to serve man possessed by Sarvodaya is its most valuable resource. Recapitulating the past events it brings me joy to feel that we are owners and givers of such a humane service.

To ensure the success of the project, Sarvodaya had discussions with the Senior Advisor of Helen Keller and its field representatives, the Director, Department of Health and its senior officials. We were very happy that Public Health Officers, Medical Officers, Surgeons, Nurses and members of Lions Clubs came forward most willingly to support our efforts and to hold eye clinics to prevent blindness. We also received support from our friendly international organizations such as Christopher Blenden Misson. Most of the required finances were made available from USAID Washington. The fact that our second community based project was well developed in all aspects bears testimony to its success. Development in field training, practice in performing activities, active involvement , handicrafts, developing creative abilities, counselling services, employment support were among the activities.

In mid 1984, 360 blind personnel, 175 persons recommended for rehabilitation and for surgery 75 people were recorded as beneficiaries. All Helen Keller officials were quite pleased that Sarvodaya was working with them. Our workers, who were accustomed to render an honest, selfless, dedicated social service through the community development concept of Sarvodaya, performed their duties in an exemplary manner in this community-based project. They were also accustomed to taking a compassionate look in the presence of the suffering of others, undertaking some welfare activities to mitigate their suffering, and in particular to gain satisfaction in executing shramadana with heavy physical labour for the welfare of others. It was the talk of the town that Sarvodaya workers and its management which created an initial system, through their very full and active involvement, provided a very valuable example to the others who participated in the project.

Everyone valued the spiritual, material and community development message that the rehabilitated blind displayed and they were treated with compassion and understanding within their family environment and the community. By the end of September 1984 there was 1116 community development volunteers trained in rehabilitation.

A conference was held at Colombo Eye Hospital at which Sarvodaya, Ministry of Health and Helen Keller International participated to identify and solve problems connected with implementation of projects. Mr. Gurusinghe and I representated Sarvodaya.

Christopher Blenden Mission which helped our project had its South Asian Regional Office in Tamil Nadu.

Mr. Gnanadurai the representative who met Neetha and me at the official residence of Ms. Susan Eastman agreed to assist Sarvodaya for at least another year. Hesperian Foundation is another long standing friend of Sarvodaya. Mr. David Wernor of Hesperian Foundation got to know about the success of Helen Keller project implemented by Sarvodaya. Although there was no communication between Sarvodaya and Helen Keller International, Mr. Lawrence wrote to Mr. Werner which revived our friendship with Helen Keller. I had met Mr. David long time back. During this period he was involved in social services attached to 'Where there is no doctor'.

Viewing our efforts from a common angle, we are all social service workers, employing collective effort for the well being of the poor. Mr. Werner once told me, “We always feel that there is something we can learn from you.” I explained to him that we were yet in the childhood stage where rehabilitation of the blind was concerned, having started activities a while ago, although we have undertaken many other rehabilitation projects such as village development services where we are at a very high level with other international organizations who are engaged in similar services.

Mr. Kirk Horton, Advisor, Helen Keller International spent three weeks on official visit to Sri Lanka and conducted an awareness creation public programme on eye disease and blindness. A loan scheme to purchase spectacles on a concessionary rate for the staff was commenced.

John Palmer, the Executive Director, Helen Keller International who supported us, visited me at Sarvodaya Headquarters. We hosted a dinner in his honour at Hotel Oberoi, Colombo. Dr. Thilak Munasinghe, Medical Officer In charge of Public Health, Kurunegala District gave an encouragingly positive response to the projects implemented by Sarvodaya in coordination with Helen Keller and the Ministry of Health.

In March 1987 Mr. Palmer visited Sri Lanka to see the project activities and visited many rehabilitation services island-wide. His inherent talent and organizational ability were of a remarkable nature. Mr. John Palmer was a priest attached to the American Episcopal Church. He had joined Helen Keller International with the purpose of serving the Third World countries, especially, Latin America. Many African and Asian countries reaped the fruits of his magnanimity and Helen Keller organization was able to very successfully extend its services.

In Sri Lanka too, there was the need to expand the project in Kurunegala as well as in other parts of the country owing to the demand for such services. During the period 1987/88 the project was expanded to cover Kalutara, Kegalle, Ratnapura and Badulla districts and a team led by four competent eye surgeons rendered efficient service and the period of the project was extended. Helen Keller International was successful in providing relief to at least a portion of the Sri Lankan population.

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MS. SUSAN EASTMAN - AN AMERICAN

Ms. Susan Eastman seated with Dr. Ari at Mason's residence. Abby is standing

Ms. Susan Eastman is an official attached to Helen Keller International Headquarters in New York, America. She came to Sri Lanka as the Field Coordinator of the Community Based Rehabilitation Project for the Blind implemented by Sarvodaya in association with the government of Sri Lanka, under the patronage of Helen Keller International. She was the Field Coordinator of the Sarvodaya - Helen Keller Project. Dr. Munasinghe, the Senior Medical Officer of Kurunegala District was in charge of the coordinating activities between the government and Helen Keller International. Ms. Susan Eastman's services to Sarvodaya and the country is praiseworthy, for, she worked with dedication. Be it rehabilitation, training programmes, eye clinics, Susan shouldered responsibility in a big way travelling from her residence in Colombo, a few times a week, to Kurunegala. It was a great support to the project's success that she kept very cordial relationships with Kurunegala District Coordinator, Nissankamallawa, Gurusinghe and other Sarvodaya trained volunteers. She marched forward with Sarvodaya workers maintaining friendly association with Director, Health Services, Public Health Inspectors and other staff, conducted meetings and gave a face-lift to the project.

Ms. Susan Eastman (Lighting the oil Lamp)

When the need arose for any field activity, she was there, and she kept me informed of every new step coordinating with the American Embassy in a very skillful manner. The essential support for Sarvodaya work was made available through the Embassy. She assisted officials like Robert and Lawrence to plan and implement programmes. We are fully aware that Susan is a compassionate human being ready to help people. I had great esteem, love and respect for her.

She accepted with grace and gratitude Sarvodaya's contribution to the project, spiritually and materially. She wrote to me frequently short letters thanking Sarvodaya and extending loving kindness. She understood well the philosophy behind Sarvodaya Movement and her support was immense. She was able to get Dr. Mendis of the Eye Hospital and under his leadership got the other doctors to conduct eye clinics. Though Susan is not a Sri Lankan, she grasped the systems prevalent in the country, feeling the pulse of the people, and the public image she projected was that of a lover of the nation. She was kind to the poor, made house to house visits and collected information about the needs of the families. On many an occasion she mentioned about the tremendous satisfaction she derived by working as a member of the Sarvodaya Family. She was fully aware of the honest and faithful manner that the Sarvodaya staff worked under her guidance and direction.

Sarvodaya field workers, responsible for an important section of the work connected with the blind were independent and efficient. One of the letters sent by Susan mentioned that as much as she loved Sarvodaya she did not forget the fact that she was a member of Helen Keller International. The reason behind this statement was Sarvodaya's inability to give the honorarium it used to give Helen Keller workers. Susan had made arrangements through Helen Keller for these workers to receive their dues.

In 1984 she sent a donation suddenly to be used in our social services activities. More than once I remembered her wonderful service and wondered how I would be able to repay her kindness.

Mr. Gurusinghe who was in charge of a reasonable part of our work was paid by Sarvodaya. At the request of Susan, the Helen Keller management agreed to pay Mr. Gurusinghe's salary. Discussing this matter with me, she mentioned that it was the regard she had for me and the praiseworthy service Mr. Gurusinghe rendered that made her decide so.

On the occasion of her return to America at the end of her tenure of service in Sri Lanka I assured her that Sarvodaya home is ever ready to receive her. At the conclusion of her work in 1985, from America she wrote to us and the letters expressed warmth. This was the time of massacre near Sri Maha Bodhi and she was shocked and grieved on hearing the news. She loved Sri Lanka. By this time Susan had left Helen Keller and was spending a peaceful retired life. Her birth place is New York. As her parents lived in Chicago she frequently visited Chicago. Her hobby was gardening, especially planting flowers. Watering them and speaking to them brought her much satisfaction. While in Chicago she made it a habit to sit at her father's computer mostly to listen to his advice. While in Sri Lanka even, during weekends she would sit at the computer working on accounts. Word laziness was foreign to her. We wish her all the best.

Susan Eastman, who was in charge of the Helen Keller Project in Sri Lanka, became a dear friend of mine. She was thin and had a pleasant appearance, seen with a smile on her face most of the time. At the conclusion of her assignment she gave a farewell party and there Susan gave me a cheque for USD 2,000 which I presume to be was her savings while working in Sri Lanka.

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SENE'S LOVE TOUR IN ROME

I am now in Rome. Capital of Italy, at Sheraton Hotel, 2nd floor Room 23. I left Sri Lanka on the 24th and reached Rome on the 25th morning. Mr. A. H. Seneviratne, my long standing friend, met me in the airport and accompanied me to Sheraton Hotel.

Mr. A. H. Seneviratne

It was around 1956 when Sene met me for the first time. He was attached to the Department of Rural Development and on many occasions participated for camps with Mr. D. A. Abeyasekera and me. What attracted me to Sene was his soft and loving nature. We became very close friends. He was thin, tall, with curly hair combed back and his complexion was more of a golden hue than light brown. He had to his credit more than 20 years experience in the Foreign Ministry and occupied various positions while his honesty and efficiency paved way for him to become the First Secretary of Rome. Officials of his calibre, going by their conscience, not being slaves to luxury, not forgetting values, not being clock-watchers and totally dedicated to their mission are very rare today. He is a bachelor, around 48 years of age.

My visit to Rome was for the purpose of participating in the Executive Council meeting of UNICEF to represent non government organizations and deliver a speech on the subject Communication and Development at the invitation of Mr. Tarzi Vittachchi, an Assistant Director-General of UNICEF.

Dr. Ananda Guruge, his wife Sujatha and Mr. Menikdivela's daughter were in Rome during this period. I visited the Vatican and paid my respects in person to His Holiness The Pope, after which all of us went to the museum.

with Mr. Tarzi Vittachchi

Mr. Seneviratne saw to it that all my needs were met and as time permitted did not forget to take me to Vietnam Hotel and also accompany me to Nivoli about a 2 hour journey from Rome to visit ancient ruins and parks.

I spent the 30th night at the residence of the Ambassador Mr. M. A. Piyasekera, the elder brother of Mr. M. A. Tilakaratne. I was given a warm welcome and next day Sene made arrangements for my journey to the airport using the ambassador's vehicle.

At the time he was attached to New Delhi we made trips to Buddha Gaya and other places of religious worship. There was no doubt of our faith, but joy too was there. I remember Sene with deep affection. He was noble in character.

THE BEST LANGUAGE EVERY MAN UNDERSTANDS
RISSO KOSI KAI

Risso Kosi Kai is a Buddhist organization established in Japan in 1938. It is a well-developed social service organization, a member of similar renowned, organizations, the world over. Its current membership exceeds 6.5 million. The founder of this prestigious organization is Japanese national Nikiyo Niwano a noble human being who is no longer among the living. Aimed at expanding the services of Risso Kosi Kai, the Niwano Peace Foundation was subsequently established.

Rev. Nikiyo Niwano

The spiritual concept of the organization and the guiding factor were the contents of Lotus Sutra (Manipathra), expounded by Gauthama Buddha. At the tender age of 11 Nikiyo Niwano learned this Sutra from his teacher. He treated the contents of this Sutra with unmatched reverence and he proclaimed to the world that this Sutra was the guiding star in his career. This great human being, Nikiyo Niwano established his own Lay Buddhist organization, Risso Kosi Kai for the purpose of helping people to travel the path of righteousness which leads to a truly peaceful society and to utilize one's own strength lodged within for harmonious survival. It was the original strength he received from Risso Kosi Kai that helped him to enjoy the fruits of selfless service, establish international conferences such as WCRP and ACRP through inter-religious activities and these finally made him a world renowned person delivering an invaluable service.

Tracing back the history of Risso Kosi Kai one would find that it is a social services organization which had had to tread over many obstacles. The Risso Kosi Kai organization, also like many new religious organizations which spread rapidly after the Second World War, found it challenging to overcome opposing forces. The opposing factions did not for a moment believe that this organization would raise its head again. “Towards an Enlightened World Population” a parallel organization started in 1969 as required by Nikiyo Niwano himself. During his time when human interaction, trust and unity were at their ebb, Risso Kosi Kai started spreading the message of religious values which emphasized the noble qualities of human beings and their duty towards one another. Arranging blood donations and gathering resources for social service activities were some of its efforts. With the forward movement of the Organization, it was possible for independent regional organizations to be set up in Japan. By this time the support for Risso Kosi Kai from other independent organizations and various religious groups was in no small measure. This was followed by international acceptance of this organization and many foreign religious organizations also started cooperating with Risso Kosi Kai.

Hon'ble Nikiyo Niwano led a representative group, a mission, to the United States, seeking a ban on the use of nuclear weapons. During this visit a Christian organization named 'Unitarians' began co-operating with Risso Kosi Kai. They matched each other in their ideals, for they are the builders of inter-religious harmony, geared to serve the world.

The unbroken 20 year service of Risso Kosi Kai made it possible for it to build international harmonious interaction which is a victory gained.

The Risso Kosi Kai Hall in Tokyo is used for various religious activities. A living Buddhist doctrine is portrayed through the programs conducted and Hon'ble Niwano had stated that it was possible to attract and absorb the feeling of unity and brotherhood amongst all, due to the cooperative effort extended by persons and organizations working closely with Risso Kosi Kai.

World Conference on Religion and Peace was a dream he wanted to realize and the staff and members of Risso Kosi Kai worked tirelessly towards making his dream come true. From the very inception of his organization Hon'ble Niwano considered it his mission to accomplish his vision of people understanding thoroughly the importance of inter religious goodwill and harmony. He was successful.

It is no secret that people afflicted with disaster world over were helped by Risso Kosi Kai. Disregarding racial differences, the foreign services section of the organization bravely forged ahead to help people. A good example of their efficient service is the manner in which they rescued the people entrapped in boats. The lives of a large number of Vietnamese refugees who were victims of war were at risk as they were crowded together in small boats. At the request of the United Nations Organization the youth of WCRP and RKK delivered yeoman service in rescuing the refugees. These refugees were unable to speak or understand Japanese language. But the RKK youth attended to their needs and performed praiseworthy service. Other organizations from the rest of the world that came forward to help were unable to do what RKK did. On this occasion RKK proved to the world that the best language that is understood at all times by all and sundry is the warmth of heart.

In 1975 as a mark of friendship between Japan and the Philippines, RKK youth built a tower named Tower of Friendship in Bataan, Philippines. This was done to erase the unpalatable memories of the past that existed between these two nations. During the time of war the Japanese soldiers were said to have committed atrocities against the civilians and prisoners of war of Philippines. It was believed that the wounds in the minds, so created, would be healed by constructing this tower. Bataan is situated very close to a place of severe fighting during the Second World War. The Governor of Bataan was pleased about the action of RKK and on the inauguration ceremony he bestowed upon the leader of RKK the honourable name Son of Bataan. At the invitation of Vatican a group of RKK youth visited Rome as messengers of peace.

Risso Kosi Kai helped Sarvodaya District Centre activities and from time to time the representatives of RKK visited Sarvodaya to witness the progress achieved.

With Prof. Osamu Muro, me and Risso Kosi Kai Representatives

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Airport at Narita is the latest airport in Japan. Last year, 1984 April on my way to Philippines from America, the aircraft was stopped at Narita Airport. I was the first to come out of the customs and along with Professor Osamu Muro. Kaitaro Susuki who was assigned by Niwano Peace Foundation to attend to my needs and another person were there to receive me. In a brand new Toyota car, we travelled about 90 kilo meters in one and a half hours and reached Shinjuku New City Hotel where I stayed during my visit to Japan.

The 25th International Conference on Religious Freedom for which about 5,000 participated, was inaugurated ceremoniously on the 27th at the Conference Hall of Risso Kosi Kai. I was given the opportunity of placing the national flag of Sri Lanka in front and occupying a seat on the stage. There were the Hon'ble Nikiyo Niwano and other distinguished religious leaders seated along with me. The ceremony took about three hours.

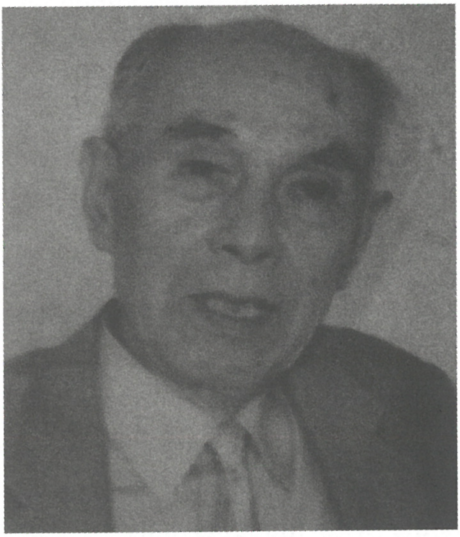
There were several meetings related to the Conference and I was a participant during two days. My first lecture was on the first day of the Conference. I attended the meeting of RKK Youth Section and delivered a talk on Sarvodaya. There was appreciable accolade. From the time I got inside Mr Muro's car, until the car was out of sight RKK youth showed their respect by bending forward. The humble ways of the Japanese and the magnanimous manner of treating their guests are at a very high level.

I had dinner at Mr. Muro's home and reached the hotel late in the night. That night Shibi and his wife who were with us in Sri Lanka took me to their home and next morning I was taken to the hotel. A pen pal of Neetha, Muthsuko Hirosi, her husband, their daughter and a sister joined me at lunch. In a little while I proceeded to meet Hon'ble Nikiyo Niwano, the Founder of Niwano Peace Foundation.

Nikiyo Niwano :

I had a discussion with Hon'ble Nikiyo Niwano for one hour during which I explained to him the present position of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. He is the Founder of Risso Kosi Kai, the lay Buddhist organization that invited me. He is a thinker, the President of the

Organization and its Leader, the Founder of Niwano Peace Foundation and the President of the International Foundation for Religious Freedom. He gifted me a camera and some of his books. It is fortunate that I was able to meet a leader responsible for the revival of Buddhism in Japan.



Prof. Osamu Muro

I delivered two scheduled lectures. The first lecture was to the Buddhist youth and the audience consisted of many religious minded people. All of them appreciated the work Sarvodaya does and its global vision.

There were two significantly important things that drew my attention on the final day of the celebrations. The first was the lecture by a 104 year old, former president of the World Conference on Religion. He was busily preparing himself, as a youth would, for the 1993 centenary celebrations of the World Parliament on Religions. The second relates to Ms. Noriko Sekigoochi, a student of Risso Kosi Kai Ladies College who carried the Sri Lankan flag. She was so overjoyed that she shed tears of joy while thanking me for the opportunity given to her. While repeatedly thanking me she presented me with a small box to keep keys saying that it was the most precious treasure she possessed. This proved to me how eager the human beings are to establish friendships.

* * *

I went to Tokyo by a Japanese aircraft which left Los Angeles on 28th January, 1986 at 12noon. I stayed the night at Sunroot Hotel and took another plane to Narita Airport where I was warmly greeted by Maruta San, Taneda San and Maradama San whom I had met at Thonel. Prof. Muro San joined with us the following day as he had crossed the dateline. We stayed on the 52nd floor of a modern hotel and had Tempura for dinner, seated on the floor.

During his visit to Peking, Muro San had met Jeff Theunis who then was not opposed to Sarvodaya. He was still regretting about Gandhian Movement.

From time to time, I experience truth as a mirage and while in this blissful state of altruistic joy, the cloud of ignorance covers the entirety of the experience, the truth to be surfaced again revealing the mind and body are not two things, but one , the truth lies here, now, at this moment. Past is gone it is with memory only and future is yet to come with thoughts only of expectations. The fact that Truth is evident now comes up in quick frequency. There is no difference between me and the universe. It is only a momentary experience of Truth turning into thought, next it is word. As there was one-mindedness for half hour, I was not fatigued when I woke up at 3.30 a.m. Taneda San and Maradama San came to the hotel and took me to the airport. The warm welcome I received at Risso Kosi Kai on my arrival there was similar, to the one I received on the first day of my arrival there.

The staff attached to this organization live according to Buddha Dharma. From morning 6.00 to 7.00 I noticed, devotees chanting Pirith worshipping in the Shumone Hall. They filmed the occasion of my visit and I had the opportunity to watch the film during my subsequent visit to Japan in December.

Mr. Takasi Sudo of Risso Kosi Kai met me. He gifted a number of books authored by Honourable Niwano. He stated that he would have a dialogue with me regarding village development and the ideas would be published in the Dharma World magazine and later published in book form. He requested my permission to do this. I readily agreed with great pleasure.

Mr. Yamashita of the UNESCO Federation came and took me to Ashoka Hotel. There I was cordially received by about twelve people from the Ashram of Mr. Seya.

Discussions were held with Mr. Hiroshi Pushi, the Head of the Foreign Division of Risso Kosi Kai and with Mr. Goto San, Head of Maruwasan, about relations between our two institutes. They undertook to look after Badulla district effective from 1st January of the new year.

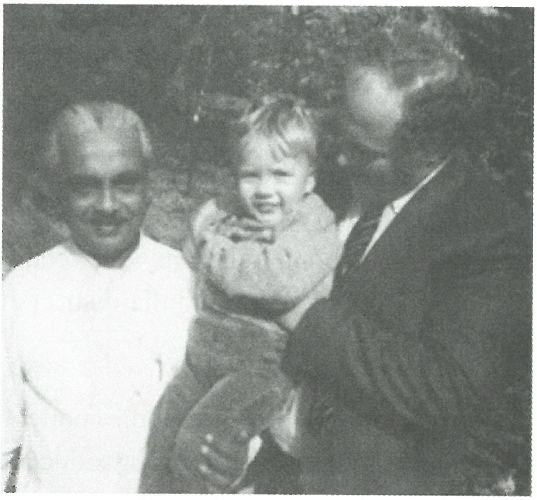
A team of six including three ladies under the leadership of Mr. Robert Hogmeyer from two institutes introduced by Dan Danlap met me and presented a cheque for Yen 1,293,450 and another for Yen 1,093,798. I gave the cheques back, requesting them to send those directly to the bank. Mr. Robert Hogmeyer had sent US$ 2,000 directly to Sarvodaya.

WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

World Resources Institute, situated in Washington, America is an international organization aimed at conducting research to establish the relevance and accuracy of laws, rules, regulations and principles relating to world's resources. I was a team leader participant at an international conference organized by the World Resources Institute.

The Conference was held at the ASPEN Institute, Wye Woods East Coast off Maryland which is about 60 miles away from Washington.

ASPEN Institute is an educational institute able to provide facilities for discussion on world affairs for not more than 75 people at a time.



Dr. Ton De Wilde with his son Little Ari

Starting on 2nd May 1984, the Conference was held for five days. I planned some other events also during this trip. Leaving Sri Lanka on April 20th, via Zurich I reached Rome on the 25th and arrived in Washington on 1st May 1984. Ton De Wilde and Sisira Navaratne received me at the airport and accompanied me to their residence.

Next day 11.00 a.m. I entered the World Resources Institute. After participating in two television discussions, along with the other participants I took a bus journey to ASPEN Conference premises. Most of my time was spent at this place. Accommodation facilities were provided at 'Manor House', a luxurious and a very comfortable and spacious dwelling place with peaceful surroundings enriched with greenery and flowers.

Neighbouring the premises was a farm extending to hundreds of acres. Presently it is owned by Maryland University which conducts research into agriculture and livestock. The farm and the ASPEN premises including all the buildings were a gift by a philanthropist.

Most of the rich in America amass wealth, lead comfortable lives and at the end gift their wealth to charity. I have yet to come across human beings to match the generosity of these people. The World Resources Institute is a product of such generosity. Mac Arthur Foundation has gifted U.S $ Fifteen million to conduct affairs of the World Resources Institute for a period of five years.

The participants of this Conference were a multi disciplinary group of erudite professionals from the developed world. The President of the Conference was Martin Hallgate, Advisor Scientific Affairs, to the British Government. Among the participants were the former Prime Minister of Norway, Ms. Gro Harlem Bruntland and a Minister in the Indonesian Government, Mr. Emil Saleem. I am the only one without tie and coat, an ordinary citizen. The theme of the Conference titled 'Globally Possible' is on 'Resources Development and the New Century'. The aims of the Conference in brief were -

(a) Formulate a policy embodying principles, rules and regulations whereby world resources and environment and all activities connected therewith are appropriately managed to suit all regions of the world.

(b) Ensure justifiable distribution of such resources among the public and the private sectors.

(c) Identify and develop ways and means to protect the environment and global natural resources, and thus help preserve the original quality of the environment.

(d) Help poverty-stricken people, the world over, and help them towards raising their standard of living, and their economic development.

A coordinating committee was appointed in order to achieve the aims and objectives of the Conference. Compiling of reports and editing were entrusted to people knowledgeable in their areas of expertise. There was a noticeable difference in this particular conference compared to how we, the participants organize our own conferences. The fact that high level of acceptance is given to those who make individual contributions towards preserving global resources and protecting environment was announced well ahead of the Conference. Also, opportunities were provided for the participants to explain their experiences and put forward their suggestions which would be beneficial for the creation of a trustworthy international cooperation geared towards the fulfillment of the objectives of the Conference. A work plan for the ensuing ten to fifteen years was born.

Information relating to various activities designed by newly formed development organizations to meet their targets, the policy changes at national level, opportunities for high level research and the like, was collected and analyzed. The relevant ideas of the participants were included in the discussions of the Conference.

The ten major resources that fell under the analysis of the Conference were: population, agriculture and the surface of the earth, earth, water, forestry, various species, power, ocean resources, minerals and urban environment. I performed my duty as a team leader as I was able to contribute to the discussions of two teams based on the experience I possessed working with the poor. It was my argument that the future of the planet depended on the vision, technology and the institutional strength of the small and not powerful groups. These were included in the final report which was published.

Dr. Soedjatmoko, Head of the United Nations University in Tokyo was the convener of this Conference. His invitation letter to us expressed the purpose of the Conference as - acting with caution and care when natural resources are utilized, finding the required expenditure to face the challenge of increased population in the future, making available the scattered natural resources world over to ourselves and the generations to come by preserving the sustenance of the planet and exercising thrift, making use of what the nature gave us with a feeling of gratitude.

Giving further meaning to this conference, it was also stated that the idea of the Conference was not to dwell in conflict with other government machineries and stopping there, but to aim at minimizing the sorrow and suffering of the human kind by introducing appropriate systems and laying the foundation for a stable global economy.

The conference period was a very busy one for all of us in Sarvodaya. End 1983 was shrouded with darkness owing to racial conflicts. With continued vigor we were planning the 1000 mile peace walk, but priority had to be given to this Conference as it was felt that there would be many new lessons to be learnt, hence the decision to accept this invitation.

I had already informed Ton that arrangements be made to conduct the Sarvodaya affiliated programs in Washington after the conclusion of the Conference. Michele Scott and Ron Lege too had come to meet me.

The same day after conclusion of the Conference we came to Washington. Ton, Ms. Ruth Morganthou and Mr. George MaCrobie were there to accompany me to Ron's residence. The entire evening was spent in discussing the Mali project with Ruth. Two years back Subasena Silva Malli and Anulawathie Nangi from Sarvodaya were sent to Mali and on the 31st the Mali government was celebrating the event of bestowal of knighthood by their government on the two of them. This brought me joy. I intend participating in the celebrations.

I was the first to receive the report of the World Resources Institute's Conference. They had expected my leadership in the subsequent monitoring activities. Among the personnel proposed as committee members were Prof. Ruth Morganthou of SILCA Foundation and Mr. M. V. Rajasekaran of AIRD. As a further step towards achieving the objectives of the Conference, arrangements were made to hold the regional meeting during mid 1985 at the Sarvodaya Headquarters.

After returning home, I received a letter of thanks from Dr. Gus Speth, President of the World Resources Institute.

THEY SAW WHAT I TRIED TO EXPLAIN

I spent the last night in the Asia Center of Japan. On their return from America, Mr. M. V. Rajasekaran, Prof. Osamu Muro, Kumitomo San and his colleagues from Niwano Foundation and Kouriki San from JIVA Foundation came over to see me.

Prof. Kouroki San

I arrived in Japan on 1st October 1984. From Narita Airport Prof. Iwasaki accompanied me to the Tsukuba Science City. It is a very modern Science City. The Hotel Taichi, where I stayed, is also a very modern hotel in Japan. I think that it was built in the shape of an aircraft.

I was scheduled to deliver the keynote address for the second session of the 1985 Exhibition, on the theme 'Housing for Human Beings'.

I am the only one who was not a technologist, scientist or a professor. My address in brief -

Housing for Human Beings towards Fulfilling Basic Human Needs.

3rd October 1984

About three years back, a teacher well informed in Eastern Philosophy visited me. He had a problem. I had respect for him. He visited me for the purpose of discussing a problem connected with removal of shanties. He was a temporary resident in one of the housing schemes. It was planned to provide housing for the shanty dwellers in a low cost housing scheme on a plot of government land which was adjoining the housing scheme where this teacher resided. He was of the view that the shanty dwellers, if provided with housing as planned would be an obstacle for his physical and mental well being and also it would not be a conduce environment for his children. He wanted to know whether Sarvodaya could intervene and stop the government from providing housing for the shanty dwellers.

My idea about this issue was totally opposed to his thinking. I mentioned to him that the government had provided an excellent opportunity for people of his caliber to help the community to live in peace and harmony. I enquired from him whether it would not be prudent to devote time and energy to lay the foundation for a peaceful and harmonious co-existence between both parties. He didn't re-visit me.

Everybody speak about providing homes to the homeless. No one talks of gifting a plot of land or volunteering to find out if there were people willing to gift lands for this purpose.

One day, a young Sarvodaya worker, engaged in community development work came to me and requested that his allowance be increased. He wanted his children to be sent to a private school where children spoke in English at home. He was of the view that his children would be at a high social level if this would materialize. He is still a community worker in Sarvodaya and publicly announces at programs that village schools should be developed if education is to be improved. Such examples show that there exists a wide difference between what people say and what they do. Some people are burdened with the fear that other people would trample them. This may be an inherent factor in some people (a disease).

A few years back an enthusiastic student studying architecture in a Dutch university requested permission from us to work as a volunteer in Sarvodaya. For this purpose he had selected a 200 hectare farm belonging to Sarvodaya. He wished to have a low cost house, dry zone type built for him to live. We acceded to his request. He planned a number of houses and one model house was constructed in his laboratory.

We watched his efforts and found them to be unsuccessful. To please the youth we introduced him to an architect who designed rural housing. He did not pay any heed but built a house according to his own thinking. His house was situated amidst the other low cost houses which were appropriately built to suit the rural setting. The name of the student is Hans. Still people at the farm call his house 'Hans Folly'. The special feature of this house is that anyone wishing to stay there does not stay for more than two weeks. Compared with the travelling expenses from Netherlands, there was no saving involved in the construction of Han's house.

There are numerous types of model houses constructed in Sri Lanka. Model wind mills, irrigation systems, model villages for preservation of power, bio gas systems and the like which consume exorbitant monetary resources. Aid for these has come from United Nations and its affiliated agencies. These donor agencies have encouraged such developments. They praise these efforts through electronic media and libraries.The wonderful results of these endeavors towards development are propagated. Post graduate scholarships for university students are forced down. All these research require heavy expenses. But at the community's end there is hardly any benefit.

I am of the opinion that these research maneuvers contribute to the recurrent burden of debt in the developing world.

Please do not for a moment think that I am against research. What I am trying to emphasize is that honesty and dedication to purpose should be employed in all efforts directed towards providing housing for the homeless.

Man is able to march onwards towards achieving the status of a complete human being if his basic human needs are fulfilled. I believe it is vital to provide proper direction and guidance for this purpose. In initiating projects to provide a basic human need, such as housing, should be done taking into consideration the various community traits. I included the term 'human needs' in order to give quality weightage to my statement “Housing for the Humankind”.

When discussing the need for housing, consideration should be given to the other ancillary human needs all of which have to be in one package, namely-

(a) A consolidated plan encapsulating the material human needs,

(b) The necessity to understand the human being interconnectedness with the universe,

(c) Create opportunities for healthy progress in direct domestic relationships,

(d) Indirect community relationships giving meaning to life, Maintain a balance in responding to changing environment,

(e) Make known to the public the individual qualities of compassion, kindness and understanding,

(f) Build a psycho-social atmosphere that would help achieve prosperity, pleasant lifestyles and promote the feeling of brotherhood for harmonious living. More than paying attention to technology, and economics and other such factors, the aforesaid should be given priority.

Housing is only one problem. The segments of society belonging to rural areas and crowded urban shanty dwellers face this problem. Housing is one of their many problems. These helpless people suffer from not having a roof above their heads, landlessness, hunger, poverty, sickness, lack of education, lack of proper employment, inclination towards crime, economic hardships and face many other cruel and despicable situations. Most of these are a continuance in their lives. A well thought out creative, cyclical and sustainable plan that could reverse the issue should be introduced to solve the complex situation of the poor. It is of paramount importance that participation and cooperation of the people thus affected, be obtained. As these are long existing problems; arriving at immediate, on the spot individual decisions, expecting instant results is not prudent at all. Even providing properly designed housing may not be a solution in a particular situation. There is the likelihood of such efforts bringing in injurious results.

Understanding fully the basic realities of life humanity in general has to face, appropriate strategies, methodologies and operations need to be put in place in order to break the aforesaid vicious circle. We are able to achieve this by broadening our horizon in all aspects of life. Without understanding the purpose of life and paying due attention, it is impossible to discuss any problems relating to humanity at national or international levels. Awareness relating to the core purpose of life is very important in solving problems.

In spite of so many unfulfilled needs and falling into the category of the poorest of the poor, as all being human beings they too are endowed with sufficient internal force, in other words, consciousness to withstand the external harmful sources presenting themselves in the form of exploitation, veiling the clear path to tread, for harmonious living resulting from simple lifestyles. Through my personal experience, I am fully aware of the fluctuating degree of relative connection between the joy of living the poor possess and the political and economic burden placed on them.

The greatest mistake the world's affluent people make is their rejection of the poor and ignoring the knowledge, intelligence and the capability that the poor possess. The rich have forgotten the fact that millions of poor people are still heirs to spiritual and traditional heritage. These people are not the descendents of artificial, seemingly prosperous communities that we see today. The past bears testimony that they come from a society that forsook poverty. They knew what life is and why people live.

Today we witness nothing but a society full of people clinging on to material possessions, wasting their time and not inclined to delve into their inner being and understand what reality is. It was then that great thinkers, talented artists, creative architects, adorned the world with their products. Resorting to violence, the world's prosperous population with the aid of commercial products, armies, communication methods of various types show their might over the world's helpless poor. The former engage themselves in nuclear destruction or environmental pollution, forcing the poor to seek ways and means of harmonious survival, spending more energy and effort. The necessary ingredients, in addition to housing, required for the fulfillment of the basic needs, clear objectives, technologies, resources, and well defined systems should be meticulously designed and implemented In order to satisfy housing and other basic needs of people. In this exercise racial, religious and societal differences are of no importance whatsoever, but the united effort of everybody is what matters the most.

How is one to put into practice these lofty ideas? In my view, considering the political and economic development alone would not suffice. Spiritual development of the human being is of great importance. When effort is directed towards moral, cultural and spiritual development; which is very closely linked with people's lifestyles, achievement of the desired goals is an easy task.

What Buddha taught us:

We celebrate the three main events of Buddha's life during Wesak. Prince Siddhartha was born not in a palace, but under a Sal tree in the city of Kapilavasthu, attained enlightenment under a Bo tree in Budda Gaya and attained Parinirvana in a fruit grove. The first utterance of the Buddha is very clear, for anyone to understand the truth as it is.

Aneka jathi sansaran - saddavissan anibbisan
Gahakaran Dittosi - punnagehn na kahasi
Sabbathe vasukabagga - gahakuttan visankithan

The late Ven. Mahanayake Narada Thero of Bambalapitiya Vajirarama explaining the meaning of the Buddha's words states - Buddha journeyed in Samsara trying to understand the cause for suffering. The Noble One treaded the path of severe austerity for six years. Wisdom dawned on him and he realized why there is sorrow and why people are born again and again. He realized that the carpenter responsible for building the house that is the human body is greed. As the Noble One did, when the carpenter is annihilated there is no building of the house again. There is no rebirth. It is difficult to explain the origin of greed.

This deceitful carpenter is not over there, in the outside. He is within us. He is the greed that is in all of us. With the total annihilation of greed one attains Nirvana. Greed is sorrow. The end of greed is Nirvana.

It is further explained what this 'carpenter' and what this 'house' is. The house is built by oneself. It is built with greedy thoughts and feelings.

the rafters of the house. All the rafters are supported by the main beam which can be linked to ignorance. As the entire roof is supported by the main beam, so is our greed, supported by ignorance within us. This is the reason for all sin and suffering. When we realize the truth, ignorance leaves us and so is our greed. Then we reach Nirvana. The carpenter cannot build the house again. Rafters, the main beam are destroyed. With the annihilation of ignorance rebirth too stops.

You are able to destroy the house through the inherent strength which is present within you. I trust you have understood what I wished you to know through the above example. I am keen to introduce how development could be achieved based on a spiritual foundation. We have to, on our own, search for and find the carpenter who is responsible for so much sorrow. We have to destroy him. We need a temporary abode for this purpose. Any house, be it constructed in brick, lime or any other material, what is needed is a house. Our ancestors lived in houses not completed. While those houses never were completed, our ancestors needed ways through which the houses could be completed. May be this would have been due to economic difficulties or may be those ancestors did not possess sufficient knowledge. We should be sufficiently intelligent to be aware of the truth and seek a path to realize it. What is the end? It is the annihilation of all sorrow. Permanent bliss is realizing Nirvana. When wisdom dawns on us this Nirvanic bliss comes our way. Getting rid of greed in totality makes this happen.

My view

I am not a descendent of an affluent family. I'm not from a prosperous society, but from a poor society. There is a small group of people in our community that do not think beyond amassing wealth, satisfying the five-sense greed to no end, keen to be powerful and remain in this narrow circle. When you shift away this small group from your mind what remains is the wider society. What do you think about this wider group? It is clearly evident that this is a group of people who are heirs to a rich tradition and respect it. Who are silent observers that understood the meaning of life. Ancient ruins bear testimony to this fact. Is it a wonder that our ancient architects are unmatched? It has to be stated that these findings of our past proves that the concepts and vision of our ancients paved the way for such rich lifestyles.

It is clearly evident that ideas of a segment of our society that believed in the concept of single tradition and the quality concepts of our ancients all got diluted into the modern day commercialization.

The esteemed book 'Medieval Sinhalese Art' by Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy was published in 1907. Some of the contents explain well, what was mentioned earlier by me.

“Sri Lankan and Indian arts received a heavy blow resulting from their interaction with the West in an indirect and direct manner. From this further disaster was entwined, when the organizations of government sculptors got dissolved and Indians and Sri Lankans started emulating the West in the field of employment as well. Gradually Sinhala and British people started ignoring the profession of local architecture. It is a fact that at least these factors influenced in a direct way. One reason for the degradation in the field of Arts is the improved commercialization. Commercialization entered and flourished in our countries dumping away the local arts and technologies. Replacement of manual labour took place due to machines, and the man too started working like machines. The villager in the Eastern part of the globe had to give up his hand operated equipment due to these forces and influences. His cottage industry had to compete with the machine made goods. This was a challenge he had to face. The local craftsman bade farewell to his tools. The farmer who worked in his paddy field enjoying a local lyric gave up the habit. These untoward happenings paved the way for the divorce between the Arts and the man. William Blake explains it as - "As human beings become old they become feeble. Warmth of Arts makes the trees blossom with commerce."

With these dangerously and painfully disastrous changes commercialization took root in the Eastern part of the globe.

In my view, it was during the 18th century that the Sinhala race lived in happiness. They are denied the joy, contentment and harmony that was prevalent then. Progress and reality mean two different things. Progress is achievable through understanding the true nature of things. Progress in any civilization depends on the carefully thought out forward and onward systems that its people formulate, always guided by the undiluted, positive expectations. To achieve this, the individual has to work hard. Reality is not quantity.

It is the quality of one's expectations that leads to progress in the Art of Living. The modern Sinhala savory is completely different to the ancient way. The quality values mentioned earlier are not found in this modern savoring. Any person who recognizes the true nature of this modern savor would know that there is no quality in it, but degeneration. Quantity, variety, novelty are not the same things as quality.

Feelings

It is a pity that majority of the present day writers ignore the valuable ideas expressed by an erudite person of Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy's stature.

They discard the exemplary advice as they consider it a waste of time to dwell joyfully in past glory. These noble human beings of Dr. Coomaraswamy's stature directed their attention on developing a unified culture. Such noble men always tried to do justice by the people living in our countries.

As I mentioned earlier, Birth, Enlightenment and Parinirvana of the Buddha took place in natural surroundings. These have been explained to the world by the noble men I spoke of earlier.

When I mention, as an example, that Sri Lankan communities have a desire to live under trees I do not mean any particular position or level. People build houses, live in them and seek to achieve an end result. They do not give any definite value to their houses and thereby the house tries to own the builder of the house.

When I meet my Sri Lankan friends, they treat me with lot of kindness and care. But there are instances of anger; pain in mind as much as joy. When I am being compelled to listen to the tales of their wives getting used to modern ways and them praising the wives is the reason. The meaningless gossip on the high cost of housing abroad, their ability to purchase those, antiques, parks, ponds, Persian carpets, and what not, are spoken with much enthusiasm.

On one occasion I received an invitation to a dinner and an overnight stay from a Sri Lankan friend. Until the lady-owner of the house finished her description of how she bought the household items from various parts of the world, no one dared to offer me dinner. Finally, I had to at least try once the water bed she had recently bought. The house was full of various items and it was an artificial world. They sincerely believe if the Sri Lankan government and the people take them as an example people would be awarded the luxury of a wonderful standard of life. In my view this standard which consumes much energy and resources is hard to define. Unfortunately, all Sri Lankans do not get the opportunity to work abroad. Even if they do not succeed in obtaining employment abroad, they prefer to work at international level.

Buddhist monks too have their material needs. Buddha knew well that although they renounced the worldly life there are basic human needs such as food, clothing, place to live and medicine, which required fulfillment. Buddha has made it known that these items being donated to the Bhikkhus and other deserving people is of importance. This is a meritorious deed.

I feel that some other items should be included into this list. Constructing wells for people who do not have water, irrigation systems, waterways, roads, bridges, hospitals, community centres, flower, fruit, herbal gardens and such other needs should be made available for common use. These can be considered as secondary community needs.

The primary reason for human beings to be sick, reasons for hatred, violence and war can be contributed to ego-centered short lives. In order for this dangerous ego-centeredness to be totally annihilated, a healthy, cultured lifestyle should be introduced that fulfills the basic human needs. Ancient kings and leaders selected community leaders from among the people themselves, who are suitable and sufficiently responsible to undertake this very important task. In short, the fault free fabric of community's harmonious lifestyle was due to a wisely laid spiritual foundation.

On analyzing this complex situation from a plus-minus angle, the result displayed is commercialization. A fine example in this regard is the solutions offered by the business sector as answers to the housing problem. At the initial stage a plan is prepared and through media general public is kept informed.

The main objective of this exercise is far from making available strongly built houses to the homeless at a reasonable price. At high or low construction cost, maximum profit is the goal. All craft, seen and unseen is employed here. Paths are made smooth for the other house builders and suppliers of materials. They are named as private holdings or public housing schemes, as the situation demands. Sometimes trees are cut from the forests since undue permission could be obtained. The reason for building houses by these private entities, are quite clear.

Mahathma Gandhi and Fritz Schumacher are revered as godly human beings. The concept of these noble human beings of 'public participation in local ventures through appropriate technology' is put to ridicule in a very subtle manner. Going against modern realities as they argue, is like trying to reverse the time back.

In general terminology high castes produce noblemen. But to get the type of work stated earlier, any number of noblemen can be hired from the developed countries. They harp on the increasing rate of population growth and emphasize on the merits of the small family. Due to the increased population they say large families cannot achieve development.

Professor Johan Galtung explains this process as one-two-three-four development sutra. The meaning is one wife, two children, three roomed house and four wheeled motor car. Today, such families have been able to develop themselves.

Under whatever chaotic situations, privileged section of the community show their might, their wealth and get themselves placed at the topmost rung enjoying themselves. This is a short lived glory. Another small group, efficient and skilled, climbs the ladder to the top. The balance population stay put at where they are. The power attached to the former two groups can be termed as a time bomb. Greedily attached to material gains their fall is instantaneous, without their knowledge.

When one works towards well being of the entire human race, the difficulties of only one segment of the society cannot be considered. Every problem should be of common interest and treated so. For e.g. some sections of the community do not have food, clothing and shelter. This situation is not confined to them only. It is a problem also to those who have their needs already fulfilled. People who do not lack much in life, who enjoy living, have not reached this stage just from yesterday. This process dating back to the industrial revolution was gradually expanded where people continued in their efforts to manage what the planet has abundantly provided for the common good. Materials natural resources, finances, technologies were increasingly used and managed. It is a continuation of a process and not of one being suddenly put in place.

In a community consisting of such human beings how would one build a unity amongst all? When such unity cannot be established among human beings what would be the fate of other beings that have the right to live on this planet? People who have either inherited or acquired property, rights and privileges would never give them up. If there is any intention of helping the helpless communities, such intentions would be put into action well within the frame that they have built for themselves, expecting glory and not through a wish to reduce desires and unnecessary expenditure. They would not reduce using very expensive items.

Decentralization, high technology, production at macro level and uniformity are visibly important to these groups. Although they are unaware, the truth is, they are heading towards destruction, due to their high and mighty assessment of themselves.

It is a risk to place confidence on such groups of people and expect them to find solutions to problems of the 21st century and also explore possibilities towards development. What should be done to save the balance majority? Elderly community should come forward in an effort to build a post modern civilized society. They should swiftly march beyond the selfish affluent groups and work out a sustainable plan. If this is not done, the selfish minority groups will take the planet to destruction, through their own methods and systems before the century ends.

Sarvodaya Vision

The ancient communities were different from the present communities. They understood the meaning of awakening of all, which is the meaning of Sarvodaya. They had absorbed the meaning of the concepts non-violence, sharing, simplicity, appropriate technology, people's participation in production and unity. Their main aim was to lead a simple, meaningful life of contentment. Instead of a prosperous, affluent society, they wanted a poverty-free community. Their problem was lack of housing and other needs of the community. If obstacles they faced could have been eradicated, through their self-effort, workable solutions would have been possible. I am informed, as in my country in other countries as well; there are housing projects that had started during the past 30 years. But the well being that the communities anticipated was not available to them. The reason for this failure can be attributed to their inability to assess the concepts and objectives accurately. The requirements such as conducive environment, appropriate architectural plans, material, technology and other related factors should have been given careful attention where in the absence of such factors the projects did not end up as expected.

There is a saying among us, “We build a road, road builds us”. Likewise, “We build a house, the house builds us”. This beautiful saying should not be limited to individuals or families. It is a teaching for all village and urban groups and all communities.

At the 37th general session of the United Nations, 1987 was declared the year of providing houses to the homeless. The main reason for this declaration is the statement made by Prime Minister R. Premadasa at the 35th session of the United Nations on this subject. You are aware that the Prime Minister has launched a programme of building 100,000 houses in Sri Lanka utilizing the resources and the technology people possess. Assistance from the central government has been limited and government acts as a facilitator only. Re-activated village societies play a major role. This is a timely step. When people are encouraged and the necessary guidance is provided, people by identifying their own strengths would awaken themselves as a group.

Majority of the poor in the developing countries either have to build their own houses or through community effort. They cannot place confidence in the foreign donors for capital expenses and planning, or for that matter on their government. People who have received some sort of education may be able to get money and technical assistance. Any model relating to housing should receive the approval of the people who are expected to live in those houses.

When providing housing, traditions of the village, concepts and their various experiences should be given consideration.

In my view, housing and other related needs should be basic tools towards helping the individual to develop his personality. Psycho-social environment plays a major part in personality building, in total awakening of the family unit.

House and home mean two different things. House is the construction what one sees. Home is a place where people live. Inside the home all family matters are discussed and decisions arrived at. House does not become a home always. Number of houses does not make a community. As much as we expect for individual awakening, we aim at the awakening of the community, nation and the entire world. This awakening process requires conformity with many factors related to living such as planning, organizational structures, compassionate action, love and kindness, altruistic joy, sharing of joy and sorrow, united effort for the benefit of all, pleasant speech, creative efforts and equality of treatment, which chain themselves together to bring about a community of human beings full of values.

There are challenges that scientists, technologists, architects and other professionals face. In my view, these are not related to technology or resources. The truth is they have to face the world as individuals.

As mentioned in the beginning of my speech, people are ready to find out about the "carpenter who is responsible for building the house" and are people ready to enhance their compassionate feelings and start on the process of helping them build their houses?

When I heard technology is being given godly treatment in all spheres I brought in the subject of poverty and the poor to the forefront. I had to argue with Professor Meyers Martin of Pensylvania University, Professor Larry Bell of Houstan University and such other scientists of the space age. But they understood what I was trying to tell them. They became my friends.

I delivered a lecture at the Tsukuba University and another one at the Creative Research Institute under the Japanese Ministry of Creative Research. On my return to Tokyo yesterday, I met Professor Pimo Kobo and gave a 2 ½ hour interview to their research magazine. I am due to visit Kyto and Osaka cities tomorrow for programs. On the 16th I will leave for Hawaii.

PARTNERS OF SARVODAYA THE FIRST MEETING OF RESOURCE PARTNERS

Many factors combine together for Sarvodaya to be what it is today. Pride of the place goes to Sarvodaya workers who worked night and day with dedication and honesty and our foreign resource partners who assisted us financially and in many other ways. This was strength to Sarvodaya. They very generously provided us money, material and technical assistance to successfully conduct our community development programmes, other projects and honoured our requests during natural disasters, cyclones and for rehabilitation projects.

Mr. W. SCHARER
Mr. PAUL BISCHOF
Mr. WOLFGAN
JANSEN

Resource Partner's Meeting

On behalf of everyone at Sarvodaya, I extend my grateful thanks to the resource providers whose generous contributions helped Sarvodaya to continue its work.

In 1958 as a teacher of Nalanda College, Colombo, I started Sarvodaya with a shramadana camp in Kanatholuwa village. Today Sarvodaya is a front row, internationally renowned organization. It is the largest people's participatory organization working successfully in over 15,000 villages in Sri Lanka. Towards maintenance of children's homes, elders' homes, vocational training for disabled we receive generous help from foreign resource personnel. I am happy to say that they are our partners in our achievements.

We had 31 donor agencies then. We were able to win the hearts of such a number of resource partners as they were quite satisfied with our openness. Heads of these agencies or their representatives visited Sri Lanka and witnessed themselves the community development projects and other programmes of Sarvodaya spreading island wide. As they had confidence in us they came forward honestly to help us.

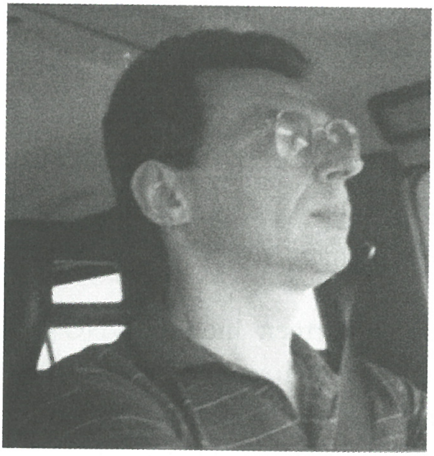
The first meeting of the Sarvodaya resource partners which we were contemplating for a long time was held on 26th and 27th August 1986. We had planned this event from 1983. But there was the difficulty of deciding on a date convenient to all our partners.

NOVIB was then our closest resource partner. Including NOVIB there were 20 partner organizations that had sent representatives. Representatives from CIDA, Canada, NORAD and FORUT from Norway, HELVETAS from Switzerland, OXFAM, ITDG, ODA and SCF from Great Britain, IDRC Headquarter in Canada, Asia

Foundation, World Runners, HELPAGE, America and FNS from Germany and UNICEF participated in this initial meeting. Among the distinguished guests were representatives from Canadian and British High Commissions, German Embassy and Professor David Waltan of Sussex University, and the distinguished Sri Lankan, Professor Ralph Buultjens. I delivered the welcome speech.

Professor Ralph Buultjens delivered the keynote address. Dr. Dilawar Ali Khan representing UNICEF and Mr. John Sinclair representing the Canadian High Commission addressed the meeting.

In this era, NOVIB from Netherlands helped us substantially which was a great strength. While addressing the gathering, I mentioned the fact that if not for the help we ad received from NOVIB it would have been next to impossible to bring Sarvodaya to the existing level of stability. I announced to the gathering the type of assistance Sarvodaya received from NOVIB to reinforce Sarvodaya activities. The infrastructure facilities, programme aid, assistance during disaster, Development Education Institutes, farms, Thanamalwila complex, resources for voluntary work in Moneragala District, received the generous support of NOVIB. There is no doubt that the friends present would have well realized that NOVIB was our main donor friend.



Mr. Peter

Mr. Peter De Haan who was in charge of NOVIB's programmes in the Asian region worked with Sarvodaya very closely.

The main aim of this meeting of our resource partners was to create awareness of the many areas of Sarvodaya activities, further develop the friendship that existed between our partners and Sarvodaya and to say 'thank you' to all of them.

At this meeting held at Sarvodaya Headquarters, we took the opportunity to explain to them our present and future plans. The main objectives of the organization, various needs, financial management and administration and information relating to many other vital areas of activity were placed on the table which strengthened the bond between our partners and Sarvodaya, leading to better coordination.

As individual projects, independent of Sarvodaya action could not be continued without assistance, information regarding these projects too was provided.

During the two day conference there were two very important items which were discussed extensively, one, the village level development, and the other SEEDS. We needed assistance to continue work in our 'Village to Village' programme which was under SEEDS. It was a big problem for us to get aid for SEEDS. We discussed this matter with the resource partners. SEEDS was efficiently managed and Mr. De Haan's firm belief was, amidst all difficulties Sarvodaya had to go forward with its success story. As it was not practical for all representatives to voice their opinion, Mr. Peter De Haan represented them. He stated that he was able to foresee a very bright future for SEEDS and that financial self-reliance was a quality victory for the villagers. People have already understood the social, political and spiritual freedom and it is evident that Sarvodaya's expectations are already met.

Mr. De Haan voicing the views and opinions of the representatives stated that Sarvodaya deserved recognition and praise and wished that it be blessed with strength, courage and wisdom to overcome the problems and continue its creative activities.

Professor Ralph Buultjens in his speech said that "The activities of Sarvodaya cannot be found anywhere else in Sri Lanka or any other country either in the government sector or non-government sector. He stated that he was pleased to observe that through our contributions noteworthy and timely service is rendered to the rural population of Sri Lanka.

Professor Dilawar Ali Khan, representing UNICEF stated that in the entire development process a risky area is expected to be covered by non-governmental organizations today and that under Dr. Ariyaratne's guidance a very useful service is rendered to the society. Sarvodaya and UNICEF had and are continuing a very cordial relationship over a very long period. Sarvodaya in partnership with them was working in a number of projects such as providing drinking water to rural areas, supplying of hand pumps, health programmes to save the children, and training community health workers. They worked with the Health Ministry through Sarvodaya and they had many training programmes. As their association with Sarvodaya was very cordial, they hoped to expand their scheme of assistance.

Mr. John Sinclair, advisor, Canadian High Commission speaking on behalf of CIDA stated, "Our very fruitful friendship with Sarvodaya is a very long standing one. As in the case of other resource partners we began by funding individual projects. Vishva Samadhi Hall where we are gathered today is a fine evidence. Our friendship began with an evaluation conducted by CIDA and NORAD. Only thereafter, did we become core funders of Sarvodaya. Canada's development target for Sri Lanka was to help village communities to become self-reliant. Sarvodaya possessing a fitting development strategy was a supportive factor. Sarvodaya embodying into its vision the concept of awakening, independence, and self-reliance facilitated the creation of a link between the individual and the community. The vision of Sarvodaya based on Buddhist doctrine and adhering to the practice of sharing equally is a basic principle deserving praise.

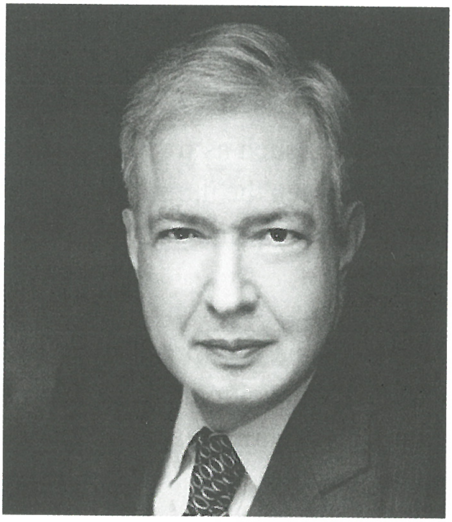
What we observe, as Canadians, is enveloped in the Vision of Sarvodaya, such as treating others with compassion and justice, the unity between the inner being and its outside activity, are some of the praise-worthy principles of Sarvodya which are of immense value to us.

Sarvodaya is the production expert of an important spirituality embedded development message, suitable not only for Sri Lanka but also for the entire planet. CIDA's intention is to be a partner in this process. "

"COVERAGE, COURAGE, CREDIBILITY" ESSENTIAL FOR SRI LANKA

We received the sad news about the assassination of Sarvodaya District Coordinator brother Kanagarajah Kadiramalai while our meeting was in progress. Professor Ralph Buultjens who delivered the keynote address mentioned about it at the beginning of his speech.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY PROF. RALPH BUULTJENS


Prof. Ralph Buultjens

We meet at a moment that is both historic and tragic. It is historic because this is the first time in Sri Lanka that we have had a gathering of this nature. The assembly of representatives from over twenty countries and organizations which are interested in the work of a non-governmental agency is unusual anywhere in Sri Lanka; it is unique. Your contributions of mind and resources are inputs whose quality and quantity will add something to our circumstances. However, your presence here is even more encouraging. It symbolizes an involvement in a process which is critical for this island and its people. It is a note of confidence in the future.

This is also a tragic moment for this nation. Emotions and antagonisms which have long slumbered are now unleashed with demonic force. In a way Sri Lanka is going through a phase not uncommon in the history of many countries. This stage is normally associated with the birth or rebirth of nations. Britain, America, Russia, China, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Germany, the Koreas, Nigeria, Cuba and many other nation-states are children of the marriage of violence to hope. Sometimes, these birth pangs have divided nations - sometimes they have united them.

Crisis of Spirit

In Sri Lanka, we thought we had avoided them. We thought that we have begun the nation building process without prolonged and major national traumas. Now history has caught up with us. The price of delay is particularly poisonous. It is conventional to describe what is going on in Sri Lanka as an ethnic crisis. This is a simplistic misreading of the situation. What we witness today is not one crisis. It is a crisis of accumulated historical neglects. It is a neglect of system and structure. It is a crisis of financial and international relations. It is a crisis of method and means and it is also an ethnic crisis. Above all it is a crisis of spirit.

The continuance and overlap of all these problems make this a much more complex situation than is visible on the surface. The government, political giants, national constitution formulators are in a process of incessant struggle in search of a solution to overcome this dangerous challenge. They deserve praise for their efforts to protect the public and help them to withstand the impact of the conflicts.

Religious leaders too address these questions and, in many cases, have contributed to the national debate in which we are engaged.

Yet, the very nature of the activities of governmental, political and religious groups is that it provokes controversy. This is a characteristic of democracy in a multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual society. In normal times such controversy is a positive contribution to democratic discussion and debate.

However, in times such as we now have, these disputes tend to divide an already fractured society. In some ways, they may further inflame a dangerous situation.

When the skin of a nation is torn it is necessary to apply immediate therapy. Governments try to do this. However, this is not enough. We have to address the deeper crisis, the crisis of spirit.

Ordinarily, this would fall within the provenance of religion. However, in Sri Lanka today, the differences that create material problems also engender psychological suspicions and hostilities, with suspicions that flow from politics into religious interaction. Consequently, and unfortunately, the capacity of religious groups to exert a moderating and unifying influence is reduced. So, the non-governmental, non-partisan, non-sectarian voluntary organizations by both intent and circumstances-now perform an enhanced and extraordinarily vital role in Sri Lanka. When the structure and system are so torn, the credible voluntary service organizations remain a critical unifying and repairing institution which helps to hold the social grid intact.

This maintenance of the social grid is what Sarvodaya does best. In alphabetical parlance, it can be said that the three C's of Sarvodaya are critical to Sri Lanka at this time.

The first is COVERAGE - The Sarvodaya network is perhaps the most important all-island social bridge today. It allows the means to reachout to areas where few others can go and perhaps more important, it allows a message of peace and moderation to be extended to areas which can quickly be roused into violence.

The second is COURAGE - This is an intangible element, but an essential one. It is the ability to stand up and speak for decency and good will when others are silent or screaming in that sense. Sarvodaya has now emerged as a dynamic third force between viciously clashing antagonists.

The third is CREDIBILITY - The acceptance and esteem which Dr. Ariyaratne and those who work with him have earned. This is evident when you visit the rural areas where the bulk of Sri Lankans live. It is based on three elements - the recruitment of high quality people to Sarvodaya, the honesty, non-partisan approach and constructive development work and service when the national service, the national infrastructure is broken.

As you engage in your deliberations, you will use the conventional tools of measurement to evaluate Sarvodaya programs. These will probably include financial ratios, project performance assessments, and variations of input-output analysis. This is appropriate. No organization, however well intentioned its objectives should have automatic access to the funds and resources of others. By these yardsticks I expect you will find that Sarvodaya, like other major development organizations, has much strength and some flaws. All these are matters of tangible fact that you can freely assess because they are easily visible.

However, as you reflect on these assessments, there are two other considerations that I urge you to keep in mind. First, the most important measure of Sarvodaya's performance is not its considerable development work. It is the fact that Sarvodaya infuses this work with a kind of spirit that is essential for Sri Lanka today - the spirit of national integration, through grassroots service. It is difficult to quantify the contribution of this spirit to Sri Lanka. Yet, to examine the critical culture of the towns and villages of our country, is to see that the absence of Sarvodaya or the curtailment of its activities will drive us several steps further into the abyss of self - destruction. In that sense, then, Sarvodaya is a social repair service - a custodian of civic consciousness at a time when this is in very short supply.

Flexibility of Approach

In the first half of this century, Mahatma Gandhi articulated a message of love, self-help and national development through national revival. The more enthusiastic of Sarvodaya's supporters claim that theirs is a Gandhian effort. I disagree. Sarvodaya's approach embraces segments of the Gandhian ideology, but its program is and has to be different. We live in a different world from the Gandhian ethos and we have to remember that Gandhi (for all his greatness) had a manner and style that sometimes, inadvertently generated suspicions among minorities. These suspicions flowed from Gandhi's role as a Hindu sage and his advocacy of Ram Raj, the return of the righteous rule of

Lord Ram - a vision that not everyone could comfortably embrace. Sarvodaya cannot, dare not allow any sectarian identification with its objectives. The inclusion of all minorities into its fold, is one of the great successes of Sarvodaya.

Closer to us in time, but further in distance, was Martin Luther King. Drawing on Gandhi's techniques and tactics, King engineered a social revolution in the United States. In many ways King was more concerned with political rights and economic entitlements than with development efforts. He lived after all, in an affluent urban society and he sought entry into that affluence for his people.

In Sri Lanka we live in a poor society and we have to advance all people or we will advance nobody. Sarvodaya's strength is its understanding of this universality. While using many of King's approaches especially those towards leadership, Sarvodaya has avoided the pitfalls that would beset those who want King's methods transplanted in Sri Lanka.

What I am suggesting is that Sarvodaya's strength lies as much in its innovation and adaptability as in its efforts. This flexibility is critical to its success and we must all urge that it continues. Therefore, whatever its supporters may say, do not measure Sarvodaya by the criteria of the performance of other Movements in other lands or by its tangible results alone.

Leadership Development

Earlier, I mentioned leadership. Sri Lanka is now entering a critical phase in the evolution of its leadership. We have had some exceptional public leaders, but a new era will soon arrive. This era will require leaders whose attributes will necessarily be different from those of the past. Unfortunately, we have few, if any, leadership development institutions. Our institutions of formal learning, our professional groups, our business houses, our political structures – all the normal seed beds of leadership-have had a poor record in this area. They have done well in developing those who are already advantaged in society. They have failed in a larger task reaching out to those who have potential, but do not have privilege. A large part of our national problems come from this lack of availability of leadership training.

We need both mass mobilization and mass leadership training. If Sri Lanka has mass mobilization without mass leadership, and this is a situation which has sometimes prevailed, we will produce a type of leader who is more a follower than a guide. Remember Danton, hastening to join the mob during the French Revolution. "The crowd is in the streets. I know not where they go, but I must be there. I am their leader. "

Leadership development for the underprivileged, especially the rural poor, is an essential ingredient in development. Bad leadership not only ruins nations socially and politically, it is also the fastest way of destroying development capital through mismanagement. In situations where there is a prolonged shortage of capital, the impact of poor leadership can be economically devastating.

Some years ago, observers of Sarvodaya felt that it could follow the pattern of several other Sri Lankan institutions-movements top-heavy in leadership. Sarvodaya has now developed a series of leadership institutes. In this way, it contributes not only to its own self-renewal, but also to national preparation for the future. Today, its impact on national leadership, growth and realization is almost unique. However, we must remember that these results are not instant, but qualitative and long term inputs for nation-building. They underwrite Sri Lanka's development thrust and will enable us to transcend our crisis. Sarvodaya's role is critical to their success.

New Development Strategies

Let me now address a second and larger concern. In various ways we are all practitioners of development process. For almost four decades, development processes have operated on the assumption that certain preconditions were necessary among them stability and a unified sense of purpose within Third World nations. In normal circumstances, these assumptions are valid and useful. Today, however, the world is not a normal place.

Our task is then to fashion a new strategy for development-development under duress. We cannot afford to wait until tranquil conditions return nor can we abandon development. It has to be understood that development is now a way to restore stability, not a by-product of it. This is an uncomfortable prospect for development planners, contributors and practitioners nurtured in the ethics of another time. Yet, it is also the real nature of the environment in which we will have to function for a long while to come. This new approach will have to accommodate unprecedented risks, invest more in human development and other intangibles than in physical development, depend more on the creativity and enthusiasm of local volunteers than on the efforts of paid professionals and adopt new criteria for measuring performance.

In many ways, Sri Lanka is a test case for this new approach to development. There have been significant gains in housing, irrigation, land utilization, agricultural expansion and diffusion of education. Some of these gains have been reduced or destroyed by political unrest and violence. Many of the gains will endure. The atmosphere may, by convenient standards, be discouraging and confused. But, this is now the context of development. To withdraw or abandon our commitment is, in a way, to turn our backs on the whole development scene. To increase our commitment is to participate in a learning process for the future.

I began with reference to this moment as both historic and tragic for Sri Lanka. It is also both historic and tragic for the world. The need for development assistance has never been greater; the will is fast fading. The risks of indifference extract a higher cost than ever before – and such a cost will be extracted from the poor. So, those of us who can raise our voices should hearken to the wisdom of a great Polish writer, who said,

Fear not your friends, for they can only betray you
Fear not your enemies, for they can only kill you
Fear only the indifferent, for it is they who allow the
Betrayers and killers to walk the face of the earth.

It is in this spirit that I implore to all of you, and the agencies you represent, not to be indifferent to our needs. Through your contributions and your interest we can join in a partnership to realize a difficult, but essential vision - self-reliance through banishing indifference, injustice and poverty.

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THE FRIENDS WHO MET AFTER A LONG TIME (TO HAWAII VIA JAPAN)

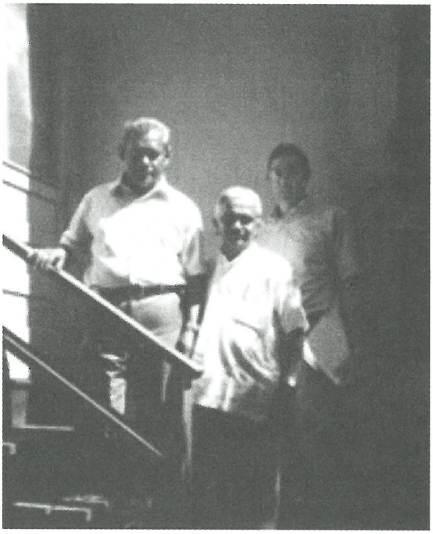
I left home in the afternoon of Sunday 28th July 1985, as a 1st class passenger by Air Lanka. I was to go to Tokyo, first. After eight hours of air travel I reached Narita airport, Tokyo at 10.00 am. At the airport, I met Mr. Ratnayake, the Air Lanka Manager. He greeted me warmly and took me out. There were a few distinguished people from Japan who had come there to receive me.

Among these distinguished personnel were Professor Osama Muro, Mr. Kunitomo of Niwano Peace Foundation, Mr. Sayoto representing the World Conference on Peace and Religions and Mr. Takayama. They received me with warmth and love and took me to Sentrasa Hotel. After a relaxed lunch, till about 3.00 p.m, we discussed matters of importance.

Professor David Kalupahana

At about 8.00 p.m. I left for Narita Airport from where I had to leave for Honolulu. Aircraft JL 74 served the purpose. After a six hour air travel and crossing the date-line, at 10.00 a.m. I reached

Honolulu Airport. Although I left Tokyo on the 29th at 10.00 p.m, as I crossed the date-line, I reached Honolulu on the 29th at 10.00 a.m.



**Me and
Professor David Kalupahana**

I was happy to see my friend Professor David Kalupahana who was there to welcome me. It was truly a friend to friend warm, loving welcome. He took me straight to Hawaii University after which we went to his home at 7256, Nohili Street, Kaiwela. It is a peaceful place with a beautiful environment. David's wife Indrani, the two sons Nandana and Milinda, who were on a short holiday, Indrani's brother Gamini and their son were at David's residence.

We had met after a long time and it was a very happy evening.

I enjoyed the Sinhala food prepared by Indrani, and allowing my fatigue and drowsiness to get the better of me, I slept in the room prepared for me.

Following day we met Professor Robert Boblin and Professor Elliot Doivi. They accompanied us to the Brogam Young University on the northern coast. We were accommodated in Lany Loa Lop Hotel from where I am writing this note.

I came to Hawaii for the purpose of participating in the 12th Session of the Human Unity Conference. Two professors Patty and Mani Wicks invited me. There were about a thousand participants representing 30 countries. I was scheduled to address the meeting for two minutes on the first day, participate in a workshop for two and half hours the second day, a further two hour workshop and a half hour talk thereafter. Every thing ended yesterday night and I decided to enjoy a relaxed morning today.

I am not aware of anything special about me that I possess more than the others here. I feel that everyone around was showing me much love and affection. I am wondering whether I deserve such love and care. Everyone who meets me say,

"Ari, even before I met you, you cannot imagine the change you made in me. You changed my life. Every word of the short lecture you gave is as valuable as gems. The words brought in enthusiasm and light into our lives."

People with smiles meet me and utter these words, the blessings. As I extend limitless loving kindness to everybody, may be, I feel, this is reciprocation.

There were about 15 special invitees to deliver lectures about whom I will give a brief description.

Major General S. S. Uban and Ms. HarindarDurga are representatives from India. Major General Uban was the Commanding Officer in the Bangladesh war. It was through the Major General's suggestions that the Prime Minister Mr. Mujibur Rahman agreed to free 9,300

Pakistan soldiers and meet the Pakistan Prime Minister. He is retired now from official duties, but fully involved with the work of Religion and Peace Conference as Assistant Secretary and he also holds many positions in international organizations working towards peace.

I met Dr. Arthur Paddy in a restaurant. Seeing him one would naturally break into a smile. He wears an artificial nose always. He is an out of the ordinary physician. He treats patients free of charge. He keeps his patients among their relatives which creates a joyful stay for the patients. He describes his method as 'Doctoring and Nursing - The Art of Curing patients'.

Another couple that won my heart is Ann and Richard Bankroft from Great Britain. Both are Buddhists. Ann has a very thorough knowledge of Buddhism and she has published a book on Buddhism. This couple is faithful devotees of the Ven. Pandit Medagama Vajiragnana Thero and once on a visit to Parama Dhamma Chethiya Pirivena in Ratmalana, they had come to Sarvodaya.

I now write about a youth. He works for GousiaViashnava Organization, well known in Europe, he is resident in Vienna and is known as 'BhakthiDayal Swami'. He was born in Hungary, a spiritual leader who works towards promoting good will among nations. His attire is brown.

Mr. Rodrigo Karaso, former President of Costa Rica and now the President of the United Nations University is another distinguished personage attending the conference. When he was the President of Costa Rica he dissolved the army. I think that the only country in the world without an army is Costa Rica. It has to be mentioned that he is the pioneer behind the effort 'towards world peace', the basic international policy of Costa Rica.

Author of 'Spirit of Sunrise' Mr. George Emmery is another pleasant person who participated in the conference. He was the President of the 8th International Humanitarian Conference. John Graham and Ann Wedlock are two wonderful people. They are the founder members of the Giraffe Project. For the common good, 'stretch your neck 'is the main objective of this project. John Graham was in charge of the operation in which America pulled out its airport from Libiya. He left the job he held as an official of the American Government and dedicated himself to social service as a full time worker, on realizing the harm done by state leaders who act contrary to humane values.

Brahma Kumari Jayanthi Sister is the Director of Raja Yoga Centre in London, England. I had met her earlier at a conference in New York.

Mr. James O. C. Jona, an Assistant Secretary in the United Nations is from Sierra Leon. He is in charge of the programme opposing racial discrimination of the United Nations and provides professional guidance to the United Nations in its peace related activities.

Mr. Donald Kees, who, together with U. Thant, a former prime minister of Burma started the Planetary Citizens Foundation, is another professional who is a participant of the conference. He is a writer. “Earth at Omega Passage to Planetization” is a book he authored.

A man possessing a high level of mind power, Terry Macbride who has come with his daughter Cherry is occupying the adjoining room to mine. Cherry has had 30 operations so far, but she leads a normal life without getting discouraged. Terry shows great love towards me.

Except for few others and my self, the rest of the participants have come here spending their own money. During the past few days, each one of them would have spent at least U.S $ 500. From their conversations I gathered that they considered the conference as an important one as well as a historic event. It is the belief resident in all of us that the positive compassionate energies released by us as a group would be a supporting factor for world peace.

There is no argument for or against anyone here. All are keen to release the thoughts of divinity, compassion, brotherhood and giving, according to their own faith. Apart from a few Tibetan monks and myself the rest talk about the "soul or "God". My intention was to explain the principle of PaticcaSamuppanna (dependent arising) and the MedaPiliwetha (middle path). I did this to the best of my ability. I spoke about how human personality has come about through the combination of Rupa, Vedana, Sana, Sankara, Vinana supported by the five elements of earth, air, water, fire and space, meaning hardness (cohesion), air, water, heat and space meaning flexibility. There is inter-connectedness and inter-dependency in our journey. We are able to be liberated by following the noble eight fold path. I cited Sarvodaya experience. I was happy to notice that they listened with bated breath.

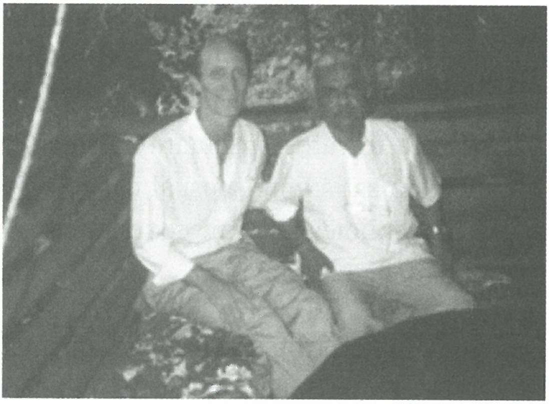
At that moment what came to my mind was the manner in which the Buddhists of our country go against the principles of Buddhism and also engage in criminal activities. If only our Buddhist clergy and the Buddhist leaders follow what the Buddha taught us, world will humbly respect us. The university hall where the conference is held is named Brigam Young. This is an education institute started by Mormons. There is strict discipline. There are rules for women that they should cover their bodies well. Even men are debarred from entering the hall clad in shorts and singlet. Smoking is totally prohibited. What is not seen in our universities is predominantly visible in this university, the discipline and the togetherness of the people.

This conference is a mark of great spiritual awakening in America. Everybody is on their way to find truth and spiritual experiences. They do so many things in the name of meditation. While these people are inclined towards spirituality, some sections of our country are entrapped in satisfying sensual desires. The wonder of it is that the economic policies of our government also add fertilizer to this situation for better growth.

Be it as it may, Professor David Kalupahana renders praise-worthy service as a philosopher. I consider it a privilege to be in Hawaii again to see his work. It is fortunate that I was able to spend hours with him freely discussing matters of mutual interest. While I am still here, he left to Bangkok on the 1st and informed me that he will be in Sri Lanka on the 11th.

He has rendered valuable educational and religious service internationally by showing erudite Buddhists that there is no difference in the basic Dharma between Mahayana and Heenayana. Unfortunately, quite a number of his books have not yet been translated into Sinhala. It is a big drawback. The books he has published rejecting the creation and soul concept, explaining the principle of dependent arising and the noble eight fold path and how

Hinduism (mythology part) has found its way into Buddhism, are very popular among the learned people of the world. In my opinion, it is Professor Kalupahana who answers in Buddha's words the western (educated) Buddhists who spread distorted information encompassing soul concept and materialism into Buddha Dharma. In the near future, we hope to translate the books written by him into Sinhala and publish them.


With Dr. Daniel Susett

I stayed with Dr. Daniel Susett, a Buddhist in his home on 4th and 5th. This house, on a hill top, with the surrounding environment full of natural beauty, is behind the Hawaii University and it is of Japanese architecture resembling a Buddhist monastery with inside being adorned with Buddhist paintings and statues. The room I was to stay took the form of a shrine room. He meditates daily keeping to the tradition of burning incense. The day I visited him, I made him repeat the five precepts after me. Both of us sat in meditation, for about half hour, adopting the form of meditation I practice.

Friendship between Susett and me began on the 4th, when we were returning home after the conference. Susett while starting his Chevrolet asked me to join him which I did. He said that he had visited Sri Lanka and Dr. Arthur C. Clarke was a friend of his. Dr. Susett fitted well with his profession as a medical man, for, he is kind, and is of excellent composure. He is at present adopting a Cambodian child. He isn't all that old. I think he is about 35. He was kind enough to take me to his parents' home and introduce them to me.

Dr Daniel Susett, me and Others

Ven. Thai Situ Rinpuchi Chief Buddhist monk, a Tibetan is a person of great worth with whom I built a friendship from the moment our eyes met. His followers attend to his needs treating him as Maithree Bodhisatva. Listening to his sermons, I was so full of devotion that I began to have the same belief as his followers had.

He took me to the Dharma Centre in Hawaii and we had discussions for about two hours. Most respected Dalai Lama, from Tibet is the Chief of the biggest Region. Ven. Thai Situ Rinpuchi is the Chief of the next biggest Region. From among hundreds of Lamas, according to the rebirth process, he was selected to this position. He may be about 35 years of age. During the discussion on the 5th night, a number of professionals asked him questions, and how these questions, requiring in depth knowledge of Buddhism were answered by a young monk, was beyond my comprehension. The people who were present on the occasion too marveled at his knowledge and spontaneity he possessed.

His followers live under Chinese rule. At the invitation of the Chinese government he visited China and spent two months with his followers. This visit was made after 26 years. He would very often ponder on the education of the Lamas, development of their dharma knowledge, improvements to the living conditions of the hundreds ordained as Llamas. I promised him that I would help him. I requested him to visit Sri Lanka whenever he is able to.

He had mentioned to Dr. Daniel Susett that he treats me as a brother of his which is a great honour to me. In my samsaric journey, if he attains enlightenment as Maithree Buddha, would not I be able to receive vivarana (assurance from a Buddha to Bodhisatva that he would be a Buddha).

The other two Ven. Bhikkhus also treated me in a very caring manner. They went to see the Ven. Chief Monk leaving off, but lingered on at the airport until I left.

When I notice the composure, discipline and faith of the monks living here, I felt disdainful about the behavior of some of our monks in Sri Lanka. I often give serious consideration on how the Buddhists in

Sri Lanka and the Buddha Sasana itself can be protected. Display of erudition, rough and tough nature, false pride and other unbecoming ways of some of our Buddhist clergy are not visible in the saintly monks living here. I thought that Buddha Sasana, some day is going to be protected by these devoted, wise and virtuous lineage of Buddhist clergy.

Today, 8th August I am due to leave Tokyo by Air Lanka to be back home. Yesterday I left Honolulu crossed the date-line and reached Tokyo on the 7th afternoon.

Last night I stayed at Professor Iwasaki's home (I met him at Tksuba Conference) and went to the Tkusuba exhibition where I met Chandrika, a friend of my daughter Charika.

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A PLACE FOR MENTAL PEACE IN JAPANESE SOCIETY

I had the opportunity of meeting Dr. Wi Yung of JEEVA Foundation at the Olympic Centre. The interview was arranged by Ms. Macky. She is in charge of JEEVA publications. I had met Dr. Wi at the World Resources Centre in Washington. He is a very special person. He directs his efforts towards a more humane development strategy which nature can bear and which is more justifiable than what is prevalent at present. It was heard that he being a professor at the Tokyo University did not receive any promotions owing to his progressive ideas.

He is an engineer by profession and President of the Asian Environmental Association. He has introduced many nature friendly, low cost, scientific methods of removing garbage, bearing the expenses himself. Money-greedy macro level companies and politicians, who receive bribes from them, opposed him. It entered my mind that he is a fitting person for Ramon Magsaysay Award nomination.

Kumitamo San and I, after two hours travel by train reached the Asian Rural Institute. Mr. Kumitamo was attached to the Niwano Peace Foundation, in charge of development assistance. He is 31 years old and one of the people groomed as young leaders by Hon'ble Nikiyo Niwano. I was informed that they provide twenty million Yen in foreign aid at present.

It was around 3.00 p.m. that we reached the Asian Rural Institute. This is a 6 hectare agricultural training institute. Rev. Toshihiro Takami is a believer in Christianity. The moment you see him you know that he has done something very special by rendering creditable service. He is active, intelligent and humble.

This institute is located in a village of the Towikian Region. The institute is surrounded by beautiful village scenery and the natural setting of the place is well protected. No chemical fertilizer is used. Instead, natural, compost fertilizer is used. They have become self-sufficient by rearing pigs and chicken and selling their meat products. The students who come from over 16 countries receive about 70% foreign aid and 30% local aid.

Similar to the practice of Family Gathering of Sarvodaya, for about 45 minutes, mainly Christianity based religious practices are observed. Everybody puts in a lot of physical effort. Foreigners have the opportunity of making use of outside facilities such as learning to produce items out of bamboo, fishing Industry, art of Bonsai and the like. I made a visit to the Bonsai farm. Throughout the year there are voluntary camps for the foreign groups. Most of the Japanese population living amidst industrialized surroundings, find this place a haven for mental peace.

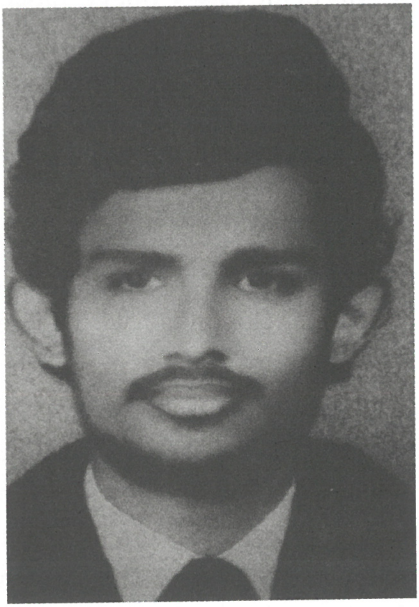
I met Dr. Hemraj Gayaram from Mauaritius and Mr. Isawo Nosaki who took Sarvodaya literature to Burma.

We returned to Tokyo yesterday afternoon.

Kunitamo San who left me at New City Hotel came back at about 5.00 p.m and took me again to the Asian Institute. A representative gathering of volunteers hosted a dinner for me.

As I did not keep contact with my home folk and as there was a bomb explosion in Madras where a large number died, I telephoned home. Neetha and Sathis gave me all the information. They were at an official committee meeting when I telephoned.

A HUMANIST THE COUNTRY WAS DEPRIVED OF: THE MURDER OF KANCHANA ABEYAPALA



Mr. Kanchana Abeypala

People who serve others more than they serve themselves and people who possess pure, compassionate hearts only can share the agony of others and serve the human community honestly. From time to time this planet is blessed with such rare human beings of exemplary living. Their sole aim is service to humanity in totality, disregarding the effort, money and time they spend in this noble task.

We have been extremely fortunate, from the inception of Sarvodaya, to receive optimum contributions from such people, which enabled us to successfully provide our services to the needy as we expected to do.

Young lawyer Kanchana Abeyapala was a man of this calibre who joined Sarvodaya, worked for its success, and at personal level did his duty by human kind, loved the human kind, and with dedication stepped forward to protect human rights in the process of which he paid the great price, sacrificing his own life.

I came across Kanchana Abeyapala when he was a student of Ananda College, Colombo. I was teaching at Nalanda College, Colombo then. One day Kanchana came with a group of his friends seeking my assistance in environmental and Buddhism related activities. Kanchana paid special attention to human rights related work while he was in the Law College and after qualifying he started work in the human rights field in addition to which he was engaged in voluntary work, also, in the same professional area.

After joining Sarvodaya, when not engaged in courts work, most of his time was spent in helping people affected by human rights violations. He instituted legal action in disappearances, relating to people who have been jailed and appeared on their behalf in the name of justice. So far as we can recall, during this period there was government terrorism, and terrorism outside government. Knowledge about law was not sufficient for persons keen on social service in the legal field. It was necessary that such persons possessed humane qualities to alleviate human suffering and, be brave enough to disregard fear of death. The youth, Kanchana Abeyapala possessed both these qualities. The last time I saw Kanchana Abeyapala was about two days prior to his assassination. I advised him to be very vigilant in his work as government terrorism has reached unprecedented heights. Smiling in response he said, “There are risks involved when one tries to do the right thing …, to work towards meting out justice and investigating the sovereignty of law.”

When Sarvodaya started its legal services in 1985, Kanchana began his work from its inception as a voluntary lawyer, came to Sarvodaya Headquarters in Moratuwa, and in a silent, benevolent manner served the people. Great sadness overcomes us whenever we remember him.

This young, compassionate lawyer, understanding the suffering of the victims of human rights violations and who acted to bring solace into their lives, undaunted by the dangers he knew he had to face, while at his own residence in Anderson Flats, was the victim of an unknown assassin's bullet. When bidding the final goodbye to this great hero, Sarvodaya and the entire country lost a great social service worker. To the few, grateful people, who were brave enough to be there to perform the last rites, I state the above fact.

The young man who lost his life at the age of 27, during the reign of terror, made his mark in the history of the land and should be remembered as a hero. I think Kanchana Abeyapala was the youngest lawyer in the Appeal Court and the Supreme Court during that era. Kanchana Abyapala mostly worked in the High Court and when working in the Chambers of President's Council he had to appear covering a wide range of problems in the civil and administrative areas. He appeared in his private capacity as a human rights lawyer. This youth Kanchana Amalananda Abeyapala, an expert in the basics of law began treading the right path in a long fruitful and upward legal journey, was determined to fulfill his duties and responsibilities at the optimum level.

He was special among the other lawyers, for, he did what other lawyers did not do. Constantly he appeared in Habeas Copus Writ cases. He very bravely filed applications on behalf of the innocent, who have been subjected to violence and jailed, for them to be brought before a Medical Officer. It may be that these factors would have contributed to this tragedy, in a world so full of atrocity, in which such humane acts were not tolerated. Habaes Copus is the legal mechanism which is applied to clear the way for the release of unlawful detention of innocent people. This practice has been prevalent for centuries in Sri Lanka and in the legal history of Great Britain it has rooted itself well.

This is the only legal procedure that allows people who have been charged of committing crimes and who have been jailed for long periods, to seek redress.

In the early part of the 80's decade some people in the North and East, who were alleged to have committed unlawful acts, were taken into custody and for them to be heard, Habaes Copus was the only legal instrument that was available. But during the early part of 1987 in the South too Habaes Copus was needed. At the beginning applications were in tens and later increased to hundreds. Lawyers had to form themselves into a small group and work. We lost a senior lawyer of this group earlier in the same manner as Kanchana and for the same reason.

He was a member of the Colombo District Citizens Committee, Lawyers Who Protect Democracy, Sarvodaya Legal Services and a Legal Advisor in number of Committees. We have to acknowledge, in the most humblemanner what Kanchana did to re-establish the lost human rights of the people.

Similar to the other lawyers of the Sarvodaya Movement, Kanchana too helped the helpless people in general legal matters. In keeping with the Sarvodaya tradition of self-confidence and not displaying personal importance, he went ahead helping people to solve their problems without resorting to legal action. He conducted with enthusiasm workshops at village level to educate people in legal matters. Mr. Kanchana Abeyapala was a benevolent human being, with a keen interest in human rights and who was ever willing to share his knowledge with others. He generously devoted much of his time for this purpose.

Human rights is a strength, a chain of rights, that a human being is born with that assist him to act independently, maintaining equality and self respect. While Habaes Copus does not harm anyone, it is only a prize-tool. When Kanchana Abayapala filed Habaes Copus applications, he had no intention of hurting any organization or an individual, or taking revenge. His was a sublime effort. Protection of human rights is a thorn in the eyes of criminals and terrorists.

This innocent young man who did not display self-importance, putting on a lawyer's garb, happily helped humankind in every possible manner.

With the gradual increase in the Habaes Copus applications filed by him, there was an equal increase in the number of death threats. These telephone death threats made his family members discuss about having someone of his own to accompany him to courts or any place where he would go in connection with legal matters.

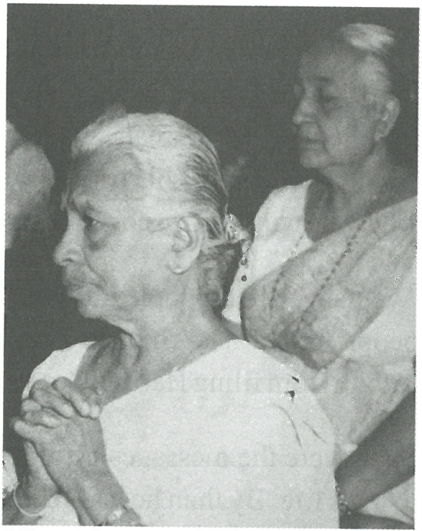
'We have killed people all over the country....There are three more people in our list. You and Prince Gunasekera included. Therefore, refrain from filing Habaes Copus applications'.

Such were the messages he received. He was only 27 years when he lost his life. By then he had filed over 500 Habaes Copus applications relating to missing persons.

On that fateful day of 30th August 1989, at 7.30 a.m. two unknown people visited him at his residence at Anderson Flats and killed him. Kanchana opened the door to a person named Seneviratne who was supposed to have come from Vidyodaya University. They shot him and escaped. Unfortunately, no one was able to catch them and more pity it was that there was no one to take him to a hospital for urgent treatment. May be, if immediate medical treatment was there for him, this beautiful human being would be alive today.

Mrs. Abeypala (Kanchana's Mother)

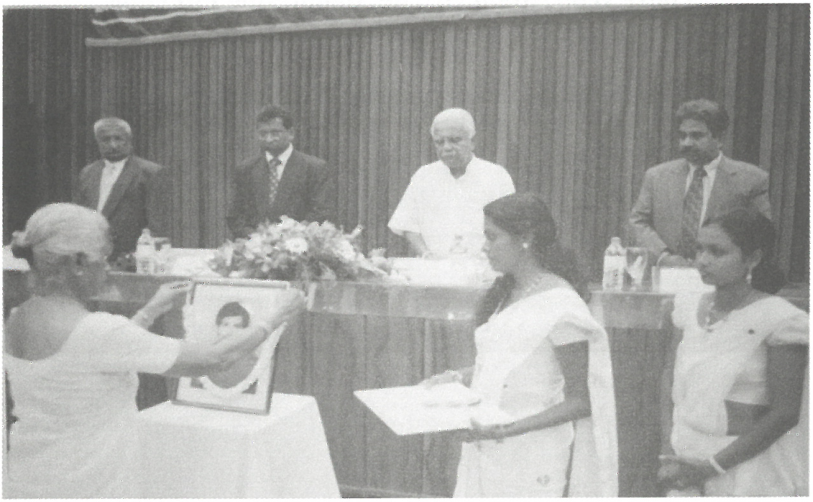
By this time, the Amnesty International has requested the government of Sri Lanka to provide protection to lawyers filing Habaes Copus applications. But no action was taken. The Association of Students for the Protection of Human Rights published an article in the papers that the corrupt government machinery has taken the life of a man, who devotedly served the peaceful, unarmed citizens to preserve their human rights.



Mrs. Abeypala with Mrs. Neetha Ariyatatne

As a mark of gratitude to the young lawyer, Mr. Kanchana Abeyapala in recognition of his distinguished service combined with dedication to the humankind, Sarvodaya Legal Services Movement has an annual Memorial Lecture in his name.

Two Sisters of Kanchana



Mrs. Abeypala Galanding Kanchana's Photo

Those Who Attended The Memorable Function

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SURESH KUMAR, WHO SOUGHT FORGIVENESS DURING THE LECTURE (BACK AGAIN IN NORTH AMERICA)

I went to Europe in December 1985 leaving Sri Lanka on 8th. At the Zurich Airport Vernon Kuling, Secretary General, HELVETAS welcomed me and took me to his new home.

Dr. Waidyasagara, Mr. Samaranayake who was the former principal of D. S. Senanayake Vidyalaya and later attached to Rupavahini, Mr. Nadesan and his wife Nirupa Rajapakse were passengers to Europe travelling in the same aircraft with me.

The following day I had discussions with Mr. Roloff Probella, a radio reporter and Mr. Peter Arbans; who has been newly appointed by the Swiss government to be in charge of refugees, and his wife. All the discussions were centered round the Tamil refugees. That night I had dinner with Mr. Hans Barder of World Runners, and Mrs. Andrea Barder. I chatted with their daughters 11 years and 1 ½ years of age.

This is only the first stop of another world tour. I spent two months and a week on this tour. I went to Germany next. On the 12th I went to New York, America and delivered a lecture at St. John Cathedral. The purpose of my visit to America was to give this lecture. At John F. Kennedy Airport Mr. Frank Millspaw welcomed me. He has undertaken to establish a Sarvodaya branch in America and he was the one who arranged the church lecture. So far as I remember he is of my age. As a youth he was in the forefront leading the struggle under

Martin Luther King. At my invitation he came to Sarvodaya and stayed for a month to gain experience in Sarvodaya activities. Expenses were borne by Mr. Larry Philips, owner of Philip Garments.

From the airport, Frank and I went direct to the residence of Dr. Daniel Susett at 3rd floor, No. 178, New York Street. It was our plan to stay there for two days and on the 14th to occupy the room allocated for me in the church. Fatigue and the excessive cold kept me awake on both nights. Later I realized that this was due to my loneliness. Although I spoke to many people on the phone, I did not receive a call from my friend Ton De Wilde which was one reason for my loneliness. Finally I spoke to Marshal Bear and felt better.

I did not inform Ton about my visit to America this time as he had given a project to three people, who betrayed Sarvodaya, and I was sad about it. But there was a great bond between us and he was in my thoughts. On the 16th I met Lucy, his wife at the CILCA conference. After talking with her my mind changed to a great extent. Lucy said that Ton too, was sorry about what happened. Their life is like that of birds flitting from tree to tree with no firm anchor.

On the 15th there were many of my friends at church who wished to listen to my lecture. Sathis Malli 's stay with me on the 14th and 15th added strength.

Lecture at the church was the first stage of my tour. On 2nd January I went to England and stayed till the 5th to give a lecture at the Rehabilitation of Palastinians Conference scheduled at Oxford University. On January 15th I went to CIDA in Canada and delivered the lecture planned for me. This is the third stage. In between there were other programmes. I had to get back to Zurich from HELVETAS and proceed to Germany. Carl and Edith World couple accompanied me to the airport. Wenemar Scherrer and Doreen Gote were at the Bonn airport to receive me. I had dinner at Wenemar's residence and slept there. The following day, along with Wenemar I went to the office (BundersHaus) of the German parliamentarians at about 9am. A powerful figure of Dusseldorp Liberal Party, Ms. Heide Broll was there to see me. She took me direct to the room occupied by the former Economic Minister Count Graff Lambsdorff. He is a long standing friend of mine and spoke at length about the situation in Sri Lanka and the world in general. She then took me to another friend of mine, Wolfgram, a Member of Parliament. Morning hours were spent in meeting mutual friends and in the evening Wenemar took me to the Headquarters of "Stop Starvation". I requested Ms. Rosing, the Head of the organization to support ten villages in Mullaitivu which did not materialize.

I remembered an incident of the past which made me sad. About 15 years back, due to the unkindness of the person in charge of Sarvodaya Batik Section, we lost an annual grant of Rs. Ten million from this organization. The immediate thought that came to my mind was how the loving kindness I extend to the 'lesser quality human beings', has been responsible for this loss, but I consoled myself that even such people should have a place in this world and that place is Sarvodaya.

I had discussions with F.N.S. organization the next morning. They ceased to help us as they had been helping Sarvodaya for more than ten years. Although I did not argue with them on this issue, I brought to their notice that they should have informed the German

Government and other organizations in Germany about F.N.S. Policy. Godfrey Woost, Wolfhang Ramarock and Ms. Doreen Gote participated in the discussion. The reasons for the reduction of aid in 1985 were the lethargy of Paul Bishop, F.N.S Representative in Sri Lanka and the inexperience of Ms. Gote in the position she occupied. I believed that it was not proper for me to blame the Ministry alone, but I made it quite clear that Mr. Woost had a big responsibility towards Sarvodaya. Discussions extended to the evening and at 6pm Godfrey took me to the Ambassador Mr. Stanley Jayaweera's residence. I had dinner with Mr. & Mrs. Jayaweera and their daughter.

The most entertaining drama that I acted in Germany took place at 8 p.m. About 20 minutes drive from Bonn, 'Amnesty International Protesting Youth Club and the German Sarvodaya Group had arranged a lecture by me, and a subsequent discussion on the subject 'How Sri Lanka could achieve Peace'. Mr. Michael Perera took me to the venue of the meeting from the ambassador's residence.

There were about sixty people at the meeting. The majority consisted of Sri Lankan youth who had sought political asylum in Germany. Wenemar Scherrer had come to know that this group intended to create trouble for me and there was police protection at the meeting. As I entered the conference hall, my eyes first met the police jeep and then the two German Police Stalwarts. It was a joke for me. It was a big question for me that these Tamil youth were there to harass me, for, I have not done any harm to them (or for that matter I have not harmed anybody).

On my arrival, I saw Mr. Wenemar Scherrer addressing the meeting in German. Scherrer requested me to explain in detail about Sarvodaya activities and the situation prevalent in Sri Lanka. As I was continuing my speech, a youth from the audience got up. His face was familiar, but I could not place him immediately. He began accusing me and brought in the problem of ethnicity. Smiling, I allowed him to speak and at the end of his talk, I resumed my lecture.

A video covering a Sarvodaya peace walk was shown. I spoke to the youth who blamed me in his speech and knew he was Suresh Kumar. He said that he was a fulltime employee of Sarvodaya and that listening to Samdeen and Nalini I got him out of Sarvodaya. This reason made him a "bad boy" again. I called him and spoke to him in Sinhala.

"Suresh, thousands of youth, same as you, I have reformed. Sometimes, I had to send them out of Sarvodaya as they had committed misdeeds. When they admitted their fault, I got them to re-join Sarvodaya. At this hour of great need, when the country is in great danger, please do not be a racist, do not start avenging private hatred and be a betrayer of your own country and its people. Make up your mind and join me in the non-violent struggle for peace."

Suresh listened to me with tears in his eyes. Spur of the movement, Suresh knelt in front of me, asked me to forgive him. I told him that when a son makes a mistake, father forgives the son. It is the same with both of us. The rest of the youth too started talking to me in Sinhala. They were all smiles.

The two German policemen and the other German people assembled there could not believe their eyes. In astonishment, they were standing motionless. I addressed the gathering again and assured them that I would be responsible for these Sri Lankan youth and that they will join the Sarvodaya German Group headed by Mr. Scherrer. Germans, watching peace established in German ground thanked me profusely. Instead of the police, it was the Tamil youth, shivering with cold that came up to me. They wanted their love to be conveyed to *Neethakka* (that is my wife) and *Nangila Mallila* (my children) and everyone at Sarvodaya. Suresh walked up to me again and said, "Sir please forgive me again." I left for Mr. Scherrer's residence.

Meeting Suresh Kumar in Bonn, I consider as a special event. It brought me joy to see Suresh correcting his views about me and joining Sarvodaya with his friends.

Last evening I was due to leave for New York to be with Mason couple and their family member Doreen at Hastings on Hudson, when it started raining snow. Gorden Macowich and Gilola Leighpatner hosted me to dinner after which we went to a musical show by Peter Winter at St. John Church. About 11p.m. I returned to Dr. Daniel's residence. This morning, with Daniel I went to La Guardia Airport and emplaned to Boston by Eastern airliner.

I was overjoyed to be in the company of Ruth and Henry Morgantau the next day. They are a very kind couple. They are honest. I am not used to extreme cold. I think there is a connection between physical cold and experiencing the warmth of heart of human beings such as the Morgantau couple. It is not only the warm clothing and the food that is given, but the words expressing warmth of heart are also a major part of hospitality.

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BEGINNING OF AN ASSOCIATION (1) VICTOR IVAN (PODI ATHULA)

Victor Ivan (Podi Athula)

I consider the five year period of my association with Victor Ivan as an important phase of my life. Everything started with the following letter sent by Victor Ivan dated 4th April 1986.

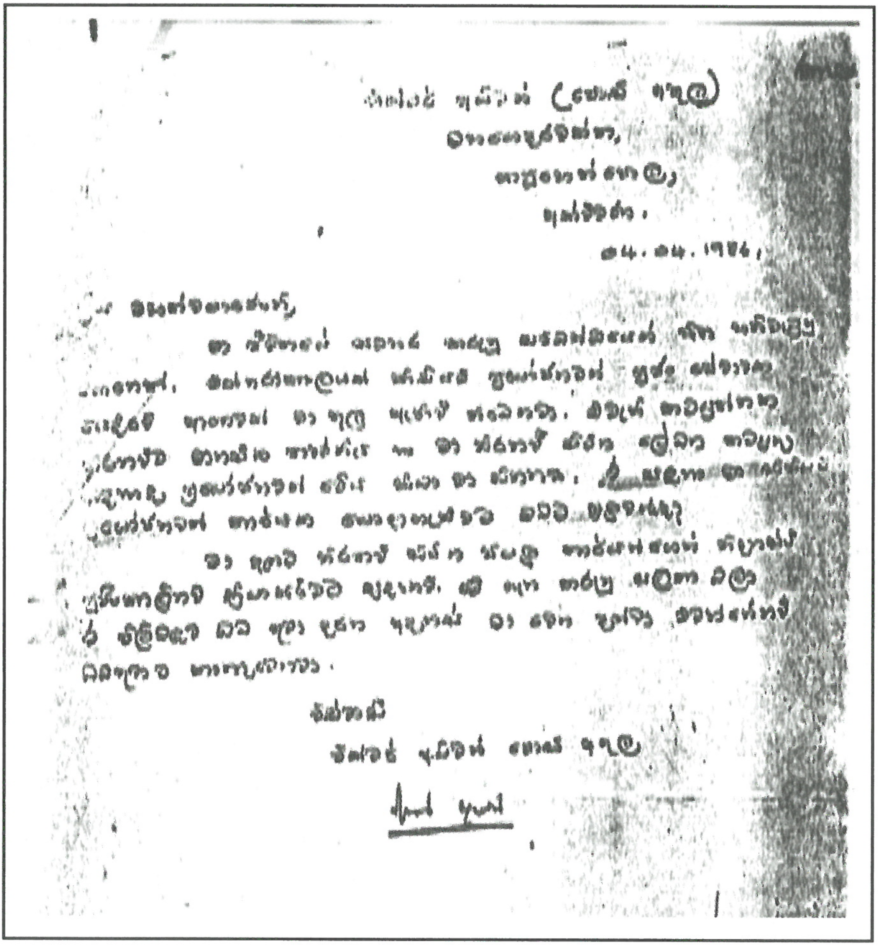
Victor Ivan (Podi Athula)
Mahagederawatta
Kapuhenpola
Akmeemana
04.04.1986

Dear Sir,

I am fatigued to the end regarding some aspects of my life. A desire has arisen in me to be engaged in some social service activity for some time. I feel such an activity would help me mentally and also in my writing profession. For this can you get me engaged in some useful activity?

I am willing to free myself from all of my current activities and work full-time. I shall be most grateful to you if you could spare some time on my behalf and let me know your views.

Yours truly
Victor Ivan



Letter from Mr. Victor Ivon from His Own Hand Writing

My reply to Podi Athula -

Mr. Victor Ivan (Podi Athula)
Mahagederawatte
Kapuhenpola
Akmeemana.

07.04.1986

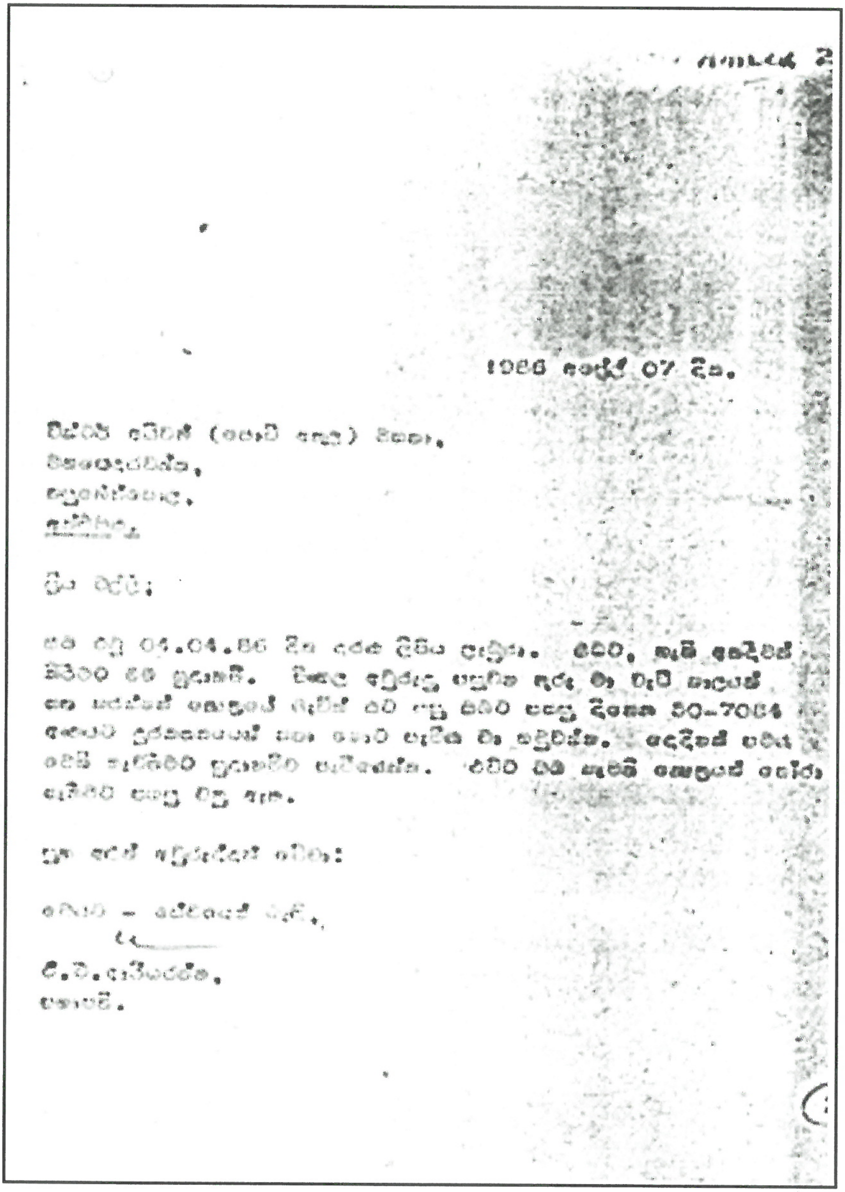
Dear Brother,

I received your letter dated 4th April 1986. I am ready to help you. Until the end of Sinhala New Year I will be in the field. Please telephone me on 507084 and make arrangements to stay with us for about two days. Then you will be able to select a particular field to your liking.

I wish you a Happy New Year

Yours in Service

Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne
President



My Reply Letter

After the Sinhala New Year Victor visited me. I received him and we spent sometime talking to each other. I did not ask him anything about his past life, but asked him to think about his wife, his children, the family and his aspirations. I also asked him to stay at the Damsak complex for a few days, get an idea of our vision, the principles and our staff after which he can inform me about the type of work he wished to engage himself in at Sarvodaya.

I took him to the Ratnayake International Hostel and came home.

On 22nd April 1986 he sent me a written description of what he is capable of doing. Since the analysis he submitted regarding the writer, the reader and publisher is valid even today, I am giving a part of his analysis in the next chapter, in his own words.

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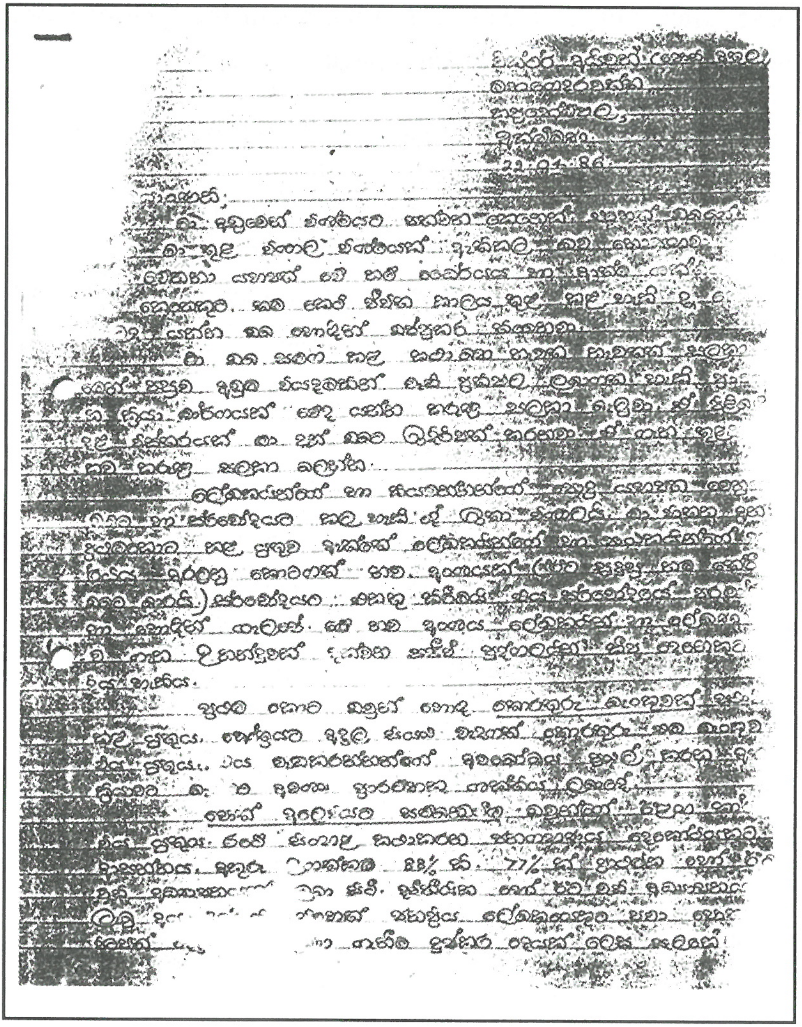
BEGINNING OF AN ASSOCIATION - (II) THE WRITER, THE READER AND THE PUBLISHER



Victor Ivan (Podi Athula)
Mahagederawatte
Kapuhenpola
Akmeemana
22.04.86

Sir,

I do not get carried away easily. But I have to state that I was struck with wonder at meeting you. If thoughts are pure, with courage and self-confidence the amount of work that one can do during this short span of life is formidable is what you have proved.

I went back to the discussions we had and considered whether there is a way by which maximum benefits can be reaped through minimum expenditure. I am submitting a short description for which I request a balanced consideration.

The service that you and Sarvodaya can render for the common good of the writer and the reader is very great. In my view what needs to be done first, is to establish a new section at Sarvodaya (I leave the naming of it to you.) to meet the needs of writers and readers.

This will be well in line with what Sarvodaya aims at. This Unit should be handed over to a small active group of writers and persons interested in the art.

Initially, a good data bank has to be established. All the information relating to the area of interest should be lodged in this data bank. While this will enhance the knowledge of the staff involved, it will provide sufficient strength to begin the activities. Then the group should join in the sale of books. There is nearly a two million Sinhala speaking population in the country with a readership rate of 88%, with 77% having primary or higher education. People educated in secondary or higher level is 35%. But it is difficult even for a popular author to sell 2,000 copies of a book.

It is important to delve deeply into the reasons for this situation. Granted there is thinning away of the reading habit and the limited scope to buy the reading material, yet, there is visible enthusiasm among the public, to read. Then, will they satisfy their urge to read without spending money, through the services of a library?

According to the information available from the library sector, the libraries island-wide are not able to cater to even 30% of the readership.

A survey conducted by the National Libraries Board in 1972 reveals that out of 624 regional boards, only 496 were ready to deliver a library service. Most of these are libraries in for the namesake only. In a Provincial Council where 30 to 75 thousand pay taxes, the number of books is approximately 3,500. If it is a Village Council, it is 1,000 books. The significant feature is that most of the books are old English books. Although there are 2,249 school libraries, less than 10% have the status of a library. Library expenditure per student is Rs. 1.30 and in the Moneragala District it is -/09 cts. I think that the average expenditure for 5,000 cricketers is more than Rs. one million per cricketer. Only university libraries deserve the name.

The decisive challenge for the narrowness of the book market is the structural imbalance in the book-sale market network.

Up till 1971, there were 1,700 registered bookshops. With the introduction of the free market economy most of these bookshop owners sought other forms of business ventures. For e.g. Hansa Publishers who were a renowned publishing house now sell rice packets. What remains are bookshops in name only. Mostly they are full of plastic items. Even this weak sales web is spread in a vicious manner. A resident in Deniyaya has to travel either to Galle or to Matara to buy his requirement of books. A person from Tissamaharama has to travel to Matara. None of the electorates of Ratgama, Baddegama, Akmeemana, Habaraduwa have any bookshops. A similar situation prevails in other parts of the island. Undoubtedly, this scenario discourages the ones who are keen on buying books. If it is intended to raise the economic standards of the writers, the book market has to be systematically expanded. It takes about four years for a writer to sell 2,000 books. If the profit is 10%, a book priced at Rs. 30/- would accrue a profit of Rs. 6,000/- during a period of four years. If the writer is the distributor most of the money would be spent on distribution of books and collection of money. It is needless to say that this is a very deplorable state of affairs.

This is the basic reason for the lack of a fulltime group of professional writers in the country. It is my belief, if the imbalance in the book market is taken away and the library system be put into some form of order, the income for the writers from their profession would be enhanced by about 200%. Also, it will be a welcome factor towards broadening the intellect of the general public.

It is the government which is best able to make this change, but it seems that the government considers it a grave crime. I think you are the next in line capable of effecting this change.

Is Sarvodaya equipped with the necessary tools to resolve the prevalent imbalance in the sales structure?

(1) The village fair held weekly is a popular place where villagers have their needs met. Many people from the family visit the village fair. It is like a pleasure trip for them. The fair has everything else but books. This vacuum could be filled by Sarvodaya. The Sarvodaya bookseller is a simple person as any other vendor at the fair. He can spread his books on a plastic sheet on the ground. He can visit other fairs also which are held on different days of the week and get a good income.

(2) House to house sale of books is another method that can be made popular, especially; the sale of children's books in this manner is a possibility.

(3) Sale of books in the pavement is another successful method. Push carts made out of wood can be used for this purpose. Money could be obtained from the sellers themselves in instalments.

(4) Another successful method is to have book exhibitions in schools and public halls. Mobile book-sales bring in three fold benefit. For this purpose, a suitable vehicle should be arranged for travelling from village to village and towns. In addition to holding exhibitions and selling books, the mobile unit can serve the bookshops in the area, sell books to the schools interested in buying books utilizing the school development fund and supply books to the Sarvodaya book sellers engaged in the afore mentioned three types of sales.

All these activities need a large stock of books and I wish to explain how the books can be obtained.

Lakehouse Publishers Limited
M. D. Gunasena and Company
Pradeepa Publishers
Marga Institute
Martin Wickremasinghe Foundation
Dayawansa Jayakody and Company
Deepani Publishers
Godage and Company
Pragathi Publishers

Other sources from where books can be purchased.

Government Languages Department
Education Department Book Publishing Section
Cultural Department
Department of Census and Statistics
Research Unit of the Central Bank
Research Unit of the University

Although there is a downward trend in the government publishing units, there are about 200 books which were published in the past that are very valuable. The prices of these books are unbelievably low. One of the primary books of Ayurvedha, WarakaSanshithawa (artpaper, bound 593 pages) is Rs 15/20 only. ShaardagadaSanhitawa Artpaper, bound 256 pages) Rs 9/-. Undoubtedly, books of this nature could be sold like hot cake at a book exhibition.

It is sufficient if there is a store room and an office for the proposed Unit. Accurate records should be kept relating to books obtained from the writers and publishers, issuing of books to the mobile unit, sale of books to book sellers who come to buy books and sales to the public who visit Sarvodaya. Stocktaking should be done once in three months. Proper records of the books obtained for sale should be kept and the writers/publishers who have sent the books for sale should be sent cheques under registered post with a statement containing the number of sales and the number remaining.

There is no doubt that such a practical activity will revolutionize the book market, which in turn will enhance the interest of the readers. Opportunities for sales will be more. Then the income to the writers will increase with the introduction of a methodical system.

Attention of the proposed Unit now should be focused on the library system. Everyone interested in reading cannot afford to buy the books they need. Libraries should fill the gap. Although there are about 3,000 libraries in the country, only 10% can be called proper libraries. By strengthening the library services and propagating the importance of the service, Sarvodaya will be fulfilling a national need. The initial step can be taken as the strengthening of the Sarvodaya library system. The village does not need a very extravagant library system, consuming much money. A simple less expensive system could be experimented. Sarvodaya has 6,037 villages and 220 regional centres. If every centre could be served with a mobile library, the extent to which the intellect of the villagers will be enhanced cannot be measured. Sarvodaya's ability to become a partner in the book market, is a by product. If each regional centre buys 5 copies of a book, then Sarvodaya will be buying 1,100 copies of a single book. The confirmed market for the writer becomes wider by 100%. The resources needed are enormous for such a project to be launched. But my belief is that finding the required resources is a possibility. A large sum of money can be expected from the local philanthropists. Assistance can be obtained from foreign sources as well.

In addition, the proposed Unit should act as a relief provider to many problems that the writers encounter. They have no idea about the assistance that can be expected from the Libraries Board. Printing and the expenses involved therein are problems for the writers. Some may have legal problems as well.

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BEGINNING OF AN ASSOCIATION (III) NO PROGRESS WITHOUT RISK

The news about Victor's visit and my intention to employ him in Sarvodaya spread within Sarvodaya. The old hands as well as the seniors had discussions with me from time to time. Most of them spoke ill of Victor and wanted to stop him from joining Sarvodaya; among the allegations were, that he lost his hand in the process of making a bomb and that he betrayed his colleagues in the JVP.

I took up the position that Sarvodaya's aim is the total personality awakening of the individual and Victor Ivan should not be an exception to rule. "We shall do our duty by him. It is up to him to do or not do his duty by Sarvodaya." Though this was my main stand, there were other reasons why I wished to offer him an opportunity. The country should be benefited by utilizing his inherent talents. For this to materialise, his personal life should be stable and resources should be there for him to launch his publications. I decided that I will help him personally and also get Sarvodaya to support him. I did not expect anything from Victor. In this case gratitude is his part and not mine.

The first moment I saw Victor, my heart was filled with compassion. I saw his fallen self within a thin structure of the body. I also knew that as much as burning coal can be hidden under ash, his determination was veiled. I took it as my duty to get this piece of coal lit and allow him to use the only hand he had to pen ideas hopefully curtailing the unsavory media propaganda influencing people towards divisive mentality which helped create friction and not harmony.

I enquired about his family and his personal life in order to help him so that he would be free to spend time in his profession-writing. Answering my conscience I fulfilled this task. Perhaps, he would not have realized that I took a weight off his shoulders. Sometimes, he may have thought that the weight carrier was the Sarvodaya Sangamaya.

Victor Ivan is an exceptionally clever writer. It is true that he opted to follow a violent path to achieve social justice under Rohana Wijeweera. He was 21 years then and is from Kapuhenpola, Akmeemana, Galle. His father is not among the living and he is the eldest. He completed the Senior School Certificate Examination and left school to pursue a career in politics. As he was without employment he joined Sidma as an apprentice, took part in a strike, joined Rohana Wijeweera and was in charge of the armory with Loku Athula – the story goes. Any wrong doer, after having been released should be given an opportunity to start life afresh. I was certain that the same principle should apply to Victor Ivan too.

Many a JVP youth, after serving the jail sentence, joined Sarvodaya in our non-violent struggle. Wasantha Kanagaratne is one such youth. His father is deceased. He is from Mavanella, Imaduwa, Galle. His mother worked as a midwife in the Colombo Municipality. He is the third in his family, started schooling at Olcott Vidyalaya, Maradana, then Prince College, Pembrook Academy, he was successful in the Senior School Certificate Examination, joined Dehiwela Central and then Isipathana Vidyalaya, Colombo. He obtained books from diplomatic missions, read Karl Marx, joined JVP and was the Colombo District Secretary. One day he came with his mother and requested me to help them build their house which was destroyed by the police. Until his death he worked as an exemplary Sarvodaya worker under my guidance. At a later date, Lionel Bopage too joined Sarvodaya Engineering Section, worked well and migrated.

Although it may have been a risk to have given employment to Victor Ivan in Sarvodaya, which is a non party, non political, non power hungry, non violent organization, yet , my mind told me to give an opportunity to Victor Ivan in Sarvodaya which would enable the country to benefit by utilizing his capabilities.

At this time, Sri Lanka was marching fast towards westernization. Lake House was controlling three major papers. Two other newspapers were controlled by the Upali group, owned by a leading family. The Dawasa Group of Companies which controlled three papers was also controlled by a leading family. The two television stations and all the radio stations were controlled by the government. What was done by the major mass media was that a small affluent urban class and the government communicated what they wanted to about 80% of the rural population.

I was single minded when I decided that I should give an opportunity to a brave, skilled writer like Victor Ivan. However how much risky it was, at a time when traditional and spiritual values were fast eroding and commercial culture entwining the country. I obtained the concurrence of the Executive Council to give Victor Ivan employment in Sarvodaya.

By 1986, the country was aflame with war, reducing it to a refugee camp. I was tempted to put into action what Victor Ivan suggested as a means of overcoming the sad situation and place before the general public the reasons for this predicament and how to come out of it. As much as no progress could be achieved without risk, no creative work too could emerge, without risk.

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BEGINNING OF AN ASSOCIATION (IV) "RAVAYA" EMERGES TO FIGHT INJUSTICE

Ravaya, the monthly publication, encouraging dialogue reached the hands of the general public on 1986 August 1st, with Mr. Victor Ivan as editor, Mr. Upali Colombage and Mrs. Sanda Ahubudu as assistant editors and Mr. Lal Mahawatte as the coordinating manager. M/s. William Peter, K. Asoka Padmasiri and Udayalal were in charge of the pictures and images. Mr. Wimalasiri Jayalath was in charge of photography. Mr. Victor Ivan took over the responsibility of the publisher and Vishva Lekha undertook the responsibility of the printing.

Sarvodaya leaders, Victor and I had extensive discussions, probing deeply into all aspects of the publication in May, June and July 1986. We came to the conclusion that an entity named Ravaya Commuinication Unit should be established aimed at achieving the following objectives.

(1) Create suitable environment to begin an independent communication and publishing organization aimed at writer – reader well being. This should be devoid of commercialization, power and party politics.

(2) Publish newspapers, periodicals, books in Sinhala, Tamil and English promoting among the readership a sense of constructive criticism

(3) Work towards the birth of a professional writer lineage.

At no time did I expect Ravaya to be an advertising arm of Sarvodaya; on the contrary, I wished for Ravaya magazine to be an independent, progressive and dialogue friendly publication. I requested Ravaya editor that no personality assassination should ever take place and it should not be the person who is at fault that should be targeted, but the fault. I made it quite clear that I did not intend to gain prominence using Ravaya as a tool. As far as I can remember, during the five year period only two articles of mine were published in Ravaya. These are given below.

BIRTH OF TRAGEDY AND DEATH OF SPIRITUALITY

(Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne)

I view the present conflict as a spiritual, cultural and moral conflict. What is meant by spiritual conflict is that the man is faced with the question on what his main aim of life is. Man has forgotten the fact that as a human being he should possess a collection of basic human values which facilitate his personal development. As a result, spiritual degradation has taken place. With spiritual decline, falling apart of human interaction is inevitable. For e.g. if a human being begins to have barriers of race, caste or party around him, then it is spiritual degradation that he is cultivating. This alone is sufficient for the eroding of inter-relations among human beings.

Today's ethnic conflict survives owing to the racial discrimination of certain people. Racial discrimination is not the feeling of belonging to a particular nation. Sometimes it is the betrayal of a nation. Everyone should have the feeling of belonging to a nation. It is not hatred built against another race.

Spiritual decline has paved the way to moral decay. The political and social development rests on inter-personal relationships. The third factor is the cultural development; what type of food should we consume, our attire, our way of life, creative skills all of which make up a culture. Impact of these to the environment should be considered when adopting these into the lifestyles. Combination of these, together with the fulfillment of the basic human needs is the common factor called culture. These are in a confused state today leading to social problems and economic dilemma. Unless one gets back to the ever present truth of cause and effect and start treating the cause, applying plaster to the effect is of no use.

There are groups of leaders among us who are accepted as community leaders. A high level of spirituality is expected from religious leaders. They should give leadership to the people by way of releasing to the universe spiritual energies of thought, word and action. If man made barriers are employed to segregate people it is lunacy; it will bring disaster and no good. The religious leaders should vehemently instill into the hearts and minds of people that the human race cannot be compartmentalized through unwholesome barriers. It is one human family.

Then, there is the next group, the teachers and political leaders who occupy an important place in society. They can serve at another level. They have to show by example and not by precept alone that they are non-sectarian. Discarding the political differences they can get on to a common platform and explain to the people on the importance of common purpose for harmonious survival. Currently, there are enough and more common problems; substance abuse by the youth has to be given priority, for, they should be redeemed of their habit and proper education given. This is a duty - fulfillment of a moral obligation. It also enhances social interaction.

Politicians should adopt a simple lifestyle and set an example. In satisfying the basic needs of human beings, there will be personality development in all aspects which is a common factor for cultural development. Enhancing creative skills through constructive dialogue, simple but quality lifestyles, discarding the expensive but unnecessary wants are the ingredients for intellectual growth and cultural development.

What remains out of the past culture is the proof that the congenial nature of the community life that existed then made it possible for the birth of a rich culture, fragments of which are still there. Ancients did not aim at unattainable heights, but planned and achieved what was necessary for a community with no poverty. There was no affluence either.

If a person here aims to reach the level of the richest man or the richest group in America that wish can never be fulfilled. Trying to establish American technology in this country and mourning at the failure is absolute folly. One reason for our downfall is giving the first place to our greedy wants and trying to shape our economy to suit the greed. In this effort what surfaces is not the noble qualities of men, but their uncouth desires.

If our politicians announce to the country; 'Well, this is what our economy is, we have to cut our coat according to the cloth.' Then there is the possibility of people adjusting themselves. While non-utility items should not be imported, they should not be manufactured here either. Priority should be given to the basic needs. These should be there for people to live. There are secondary needs such as education and health. There are other needs of the individual, at family and community level extending to national level. Economic policies should be able to meet the needs of all levels and this is possible only through proper understanding. The country can march forward with a leadership capable of getting the support from the community.

A TOTAL CHANGE IN THE COMMUNITY SYSTEM

A.T. Ariyaratne

The country's leaders who were at the time when Sri Lanka became an independent State should have utilized the ancient moral traditions, the natural inheritance and skills of the people and used them to develop a livelihood philosophy for the people. But the leaders of that time did not do this. If it was done, the Tamil speaking people could have preserved their culture; the Sinhala people could have done the same with Sinhala culture; other minorities too would have preserved their culture. They would have been united, keeping their own identity. Instead what happened? Let us look at the North. Leadership in the North was given to the descendents from high caste families. Consider the elections here. People from 'powerful' family backgrounds were given the opportunity, similar to the North. The rest of the country too had people from affluent families entering the democratic process and enjoying the privileges, from the time of the white man.

The leaders were gaining access through political parties to occupy the places that the white man occupied and the officialdom was getting weaker and weaker and finally its independence dwindled into a state of carrying out orders by the politically powerful. Whether it is the North or the South, what happened to people is the same. They were debarred from receiving justice.

Through the democratic parliamentary tradition, a political connection was maintained between the North and the South. But with the expulsion or forced expulsion of the Tamil United Front, this connection fell to pieces. What surfaced was the emerging of the youth armed groups belonging to the lower rung. Although a situation akin to what prevailed in the North was not seen in the South, yet there were sporadic groups seeking violent methods for redress. All these led the country into a web of confusion.

Who are the beneficiaries of this? It is not the politicians who try to preserve the things they received from the past and retain power, neither the armed groups, nor the general public, but the business world, the commercial people who create trouble in the country, who reject values and who do not care. Today they are at the highest level. Bomb explosions, fighting and murder are not a problem to them. They only have to strengthen their security and carry on regardless. The solution for this lies in the hands of the people who believe in the concepts of freedom. They must get together and formulate a proper system which assists human beings to live peacefully.

Sarvodaya from the inception observed this situation and announced that the Sri Lankan population held diverse views. We were able to work in any part of the island as we recognized this factor. We did not straightaway plunge ourselves into solving problems. We knew these problems were only symptoms of diseases. We identified causes of the illnesses.

Our next step was to enlist a group of people sufficiently capable of putting this idea into practice, answering various needs of the people. In the meantime we had to spend time rehabilitating the refugees who have undergone much suffering. Utilizing our thinking, skills and organizational methods we made use of this opportunity as a media for people to get themselves grouped together.

Our strength lies in our ability to have a good supportive base for the national pyramid. No one can stop the pyramid top falling apart. This crumbling down can be temporarily stopped by strengthening the army, filling the prisons with people. It is only temporary.

We do not like to see the death of even a single individual. When a social system is geared towards destruction of human kind, we cannot do anything but provide relief. We are ever so agreeable to see this system annihilated and a fresh one established. But this new system cannot begin from the top. It has to originate from the bottom. Although the people at the top level have their conflicts amongst them, I do not for a moment think that it is impossible to unite the general public consisting of Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities and stop dividing the country. It can be done with proper decentralization of power. But the pyramid base is a strong chain linking the Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities together. With this structure in place, I do not believe for a moment that it is not impossible to stop the contemplated division of the country by some sectors. I feel that justifiable decentralization of power is the solution.

Likewise, this artificial, illusive economic system will fall; sometimes it may fall on the creators of the system.

I do not think this could be solved on behalf of the people by anyone. It is the duty of the intellectuals who are not power hungry, who are not keen to amass riches, to clear a path for the people to solve this problem straightaway. Our efforts are directed towards this goal.

FEELINGS - EFFICIENCY PROBLEMS ARISE FOR RAVAYA

It was my intention to introduce novel methods to all Sections of Sarvodaya for systematic advancement. In 1983, I presented to the Executive Council the blue print of an alternate economic vision and methodology for implementation. The response was great, but nobody capable of doing it could be found in Sarvodaya at that time.

On 1986 July 7th I prepared a policy document for the establishment of the Economic Enterprises Development Services section and got it approved by the Executive Council.

Mr. Ananda Chittampalam who was nominated to the Executive Council was a well known businessman during that period. I requested him to get a suitable youth to head the Sarvodaya Economic Entereprises Development Services Division. One day Mr. Chittampalam brought before me a bespectacled thin youth. He was an Accountant at Mahaweli Authority and has worked overseas also as an accountant, and he was in search of employment.

Mr. Dulan de Silva

I entrusted him with the responsibility of organizing the SEEDS. He was Mr. Dulan de Silva. He had his secondary education at Royal College and had qualified as an accountant subsequently. I had two things in my mind about Dulan.

Firstly, I was keen to get him to serve the general public instead of limiting his expertise to a private sector organization or the government. At the same I wished to extend a hand for him to build up his personality and have a successful personal life. He was a bachelor then. He came by bus to Rawatawatte junction and walked to my office. I provided him office facilities. By a decision taken at the Executive Council Meeting held on 1st May 1986 he was appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of SEEDS. I introduced Dulan Malli to the relevant officials at Sarvodaya. Sarvodaya was preparing its income expenditure statement and Dulan was given the responsibility to undertake this work as an accountant. He performed well and earned the respect of Sarvodaya elders and NOVIB, our main donor agency. He was given the complete authority to recruit staff including Saliya Ranasinghe and other senior staff. He very cleverly selected his juniors and very efficiently conducted the affairs of the Unit. A stable foundation was laid. I supported his work as far as possible. I allowed him to use my jeep and my car, and helped him to carry out his duties with skill and efficiency.

It was not an easy task to get Harsha Kumara Navaratne, Sarvodaya Field Director, Mr. P. W. Mahawatte, in charge of income generation projects, newly joined Victor Ivan (like Dulan) in charge of Ravaya, all very powerful personalities, to travel in one direction. All wanted me on their side only, to support their individual point of view. I had to get them together for the onward journey of Sarvodaya. All of them received individual advice from me and were obedient to me. I had to focus my attention on many other sections of Sarvodaya and also I had to travel overseas frequently. At that time there was no elder in Sarvodaya, sufficiently skilled to resolve the differences between these people. There was discontent at District level too.

Hewa Malli, in charge of Matara district economic activities would not ever agree to work under the supervision of Dulan. Susiri de Silva Malli did not want Dulan de Silva to take over the economic activities of Vishva Lekha. Victor Ivan Malli was keen to make good progress in the Ravaya activities and was not interested in the onward march of Sarvodaya. It was not at all an easy matter to take a neutral stand, respecting the views of all concerned, amidst this confusion. It was yet a more difficult task as everyone was conducting the affairs in his particular section, in an efficient manner.

Ravaya became the most sought after popular monthly. The printing costs at Vishva Lekha swelled to exceed Rupees three million. Ravaya became the main media arm that criticized the government. The President, the Prime Minister and the officials of the government distanced themselves from me and started making things difficult for me. I was able to withstand this. I arranged for Victor Ivan a meeting with the President and the Prime Minister in order that he may explain Ravaya's position.

Vishva Lekha had allocated all its resources to Ravaya and the former was about to be closed. Very patiently I started seeking solutions to overcome this difficult situation. Victor Ivan lacked patience. It was the same with SEEDS. With great patience and tolerance I tried to help Dulan de Silva in solving the problems. Dulan lacked patience. At this decisive moment Harsha Kumara, making use of the situation was able to influence the Executive Council Members to make a decision that Vishva Lekha be stopped from printing Ravaya. I then realized that making decisions solely using the mind without consulting the heart is most dangerous in human interaction. It was not possible to continue Vishva Lekha, running at a loss due to Ravaya.

I entrusted Ravaya, then a weekly paper to Dulan and SEEDS management and advised Dulan that Ravaya should be made an independent unit as soon as possible and for Sarvodaya to stop all connections with Ravaya. This resulted in Victor Ivan sending me two threatening letters dated 13th May, 1991 and 5th July, 1991. He appeased his anger by criticizing me vehemently in Ravaya. As an answer to the criticisms levelled against me in Ravaya I sent a very compassionate response, to Mr. Victor Ivan (somewhat similar to my first letter to him five years earlier) and closed all my official connections with him.

My reply to his letter five years later -

6th May 1991
Mr. Victor Ivan
Editor, Ravaya
No. 90, Pirivena Road
Ratmalana.

My Dear Athula Malli,

I read the article "For your readers and patrons" which appeared in Ravaya yesterday.

To your request contained in your letter dated 4th April 1986, your suggestions when you met me on 22nd April 1986, I complied with equanimity. Today, you are a first class writer, editor of a newspaper, a powerful person with many friends. I am happy about it and I wish you all the best.

As explained in your letter of 22nd April 1986, you came to enrich Sarvodaya. I made available to you and Ravaya, through Sarvodaya, a huge amount of money, thus enriching both, amidst great harassment and risk I gave you protection.

I am happy that Ravaya reaches the reader as a weekly newspaper. For this purpose I provided the money from SEEDS through Dulan.

Yours in service
A. T. Ariyaratne
PRESIDENT

Dulan de Silva, most obedient to me had a weakness of impatience which knew no bounds and reaching limitless heights he was able to hurt people using words. I tried to get him out of this weakness, but to no avail. He began to vilify me and I knew that it was next to impossibility for him to continue in Sarvodaya with this attitude. I decided to handover the assignment I had in Uganda with the World Bank and ensure a safe future for him. I obtained the necessary application forms from the World Bank and completed all the formalities. I accompanied him to Uganda and provided him the opportunity of continuing the work from where I stopped. I also gave him the necessary leave.

In the meantime, at the Executive Council Meeting held on 21st July 1991, in a very uncivilized manner he said that the Executive Director, Mr. Sarath Hewagama was very inefficient, knew next to nothing about administration and that he should resign from Sarvodaya. Almost every Executive Council Member spoke blaming Dulan. He responded that not only the Executive Director, but also the President (i.e. myself) should resign. Senior members who were with Sarvodaya from the inception took serious note of his statement and expressed their disagreement with great force. I listened patiently. Government on one hand was against us and on the other; some of our donor agencies were loyal to Dulan.

One day, in July 1991, for the first time, I summoned the SEEDS staff to a family gathering at Damsak. Dulan too was there. Spending nearly 1 ½ hours I explained Sarvodaya's vision. Thereafter, Mr. D. A. Perera called the SEEDS staff to a separate meeting and explained to them on how duties will be allocated among the four Chief Executive Officers. Dulan's deceitful betrayal has now been proved. I was surprised to read the letter he has sent in his own handwriting to the President and NGOs. This is a strange human being, who, having acted in the most treacherous manner, capable enough to sit in front of me, face to face with the least shame, as if everything was perfectly normal.

Mr. Dharmapriya Wesumperuma, Chairman, SEEDS Committee tendered his resignation that he no longer could work with Dulan. It was unanimously decided that Dulan de Silva should be expelled from Sarvodaya Executive Council with effect from 21st July 1991 and effective from 31st August, 1991 the membership he held in Sarvodaya would cease.

Now, the President of Sri Lanka was attacking us openly. He has appointed a Commission to probe into the activities of non-governmental organizations. One day Dulan 'gate-crashed' into my office and demanded whether Vishva Lekha Press was not going to be handed over to SEEDS. May be he thought he could have me under his thumb. "Definitely no" was my reply. Dulan responded, "I will directly go to President Premadasa. I will give evidence at the NGO Commission. I will expose your activities". I said, "Dulan Malli, please wait for a while". I walked out of my office and got my personal secretary Mrs. Rose Perera to prepare a letter on the following lines. "With immediate effect, you are relieved from all your duties with Sarvodaya. You are instructed to hand over the documents in your possession to your Assistant and leave Sarvodaya premises." Handing this letter to Dulan de Silva, I said, "Dulan Malli, now it is very easy for you to expose my activities."

Without uttering a word he left my office.

After he left Sarvodaya, unlike some others, Dulan did not mention anything against me or Sarvodaya. Instead, according to what I have heard, he had on many occasions praised Sarvodaya.

Afterwards, he turned a new page; a total change took place, inclined in the direction of spiritual development. Dulan Malli was humble enough to visit me and request forgiveness which was readily available from me. Our friendship continues.

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UPCOUNTRY PEACE WALK FROM HATTON TO ADAMS PEAK

Peace is not a mirage or a dream. It is a reality that man always expects. The 1983 Black July and its aftermath affected the minds of people so much that their hopes and aspirations were erased and the shining light of expectation in their hearts for a better future was extinguished. The ethnic conflicts were not confined to the North and the East but were spread in and around upcountry, NuwaraEliya, Hatton, Talawakele, Maskeliya and Norwood in a big way. The majority of the people in these areas lead a hand to mouth existence. The time was ripe to act fast for anyone keen on bringing solace to the wounded hearts of those helpless people, the victims of war, having lost their loved ones and reduced to further poverty. As time and tide wait for no man, we at Sarvodaya decided that we do something that would bring relief to these people who have lost their belongings and who are displaced. Having this in mind we organized this peace walk. Plantation sector is a multi-racial, multi-religious population of Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim and so forth. Army camps, police barriers would not help re-build peace among these people. In no way will peace and justice be established by one race trying to dominate the other or by using weaponry, showing their might and chasing away some section of the population through violent means. For peace to prevail in a community some alternate method where all races become partners in a process should be planned and implemented. Peace walk was a success in this regard. As the plantation sector was keen on living peacefully they were much interested in our efforts and were actively contributing their share.

In trying to achieve such sublime goals, the use of law and authority would only lead to meagre results. Such results would also only be short-lived. In order to minimize the traumatic feelings of the community by the acts of ruthless gangs of plunderers, we had to explain our post-action aims prior to launching of the peace walk. It was our intention to establish peace committees in all villages in these areas repair the damaged houses and get Sinhala and Tamil people to maintain their cultural identities. We expected to find the required funding for this project. We had planned to ensure the friendly interaction among the communities by forming community groups that would also be involved in rehabilitation work. We fulfilled our promises after the peace walk.

The first peace walk organized by Sarvodaya to bring about peace and harmony among various community groups began from Hatton town. The peace walk which began on 25th March 1986, morning of the Full Moon Day from Hatton Police Station ended at Adam's Peak. The peace procession walked through Hatton, Talaweakele, Kotagala, Patana, Dickoya, Norwood, Maskeliya, Samimale, Bagawantalawa, Norton, Watawala, Gingathhena and other places. People from other communities joined the peace walk as it passed their areas. It resembled a pilgrimage procession to Adam's Peak.

The decision to launch a peace walk was taken at the Sarvodaya National Peace Conference held at Sarvodaya Kuda Oya Centre. Mr. Gamini Gunawardena, the Senior Superintendent of Police, Central Region was keen that the upcountry people be given some form of assistance. We cannot forget the encouragement and maximum support given by our devoted friend Mr. Gamini Gunawardena. There was ample support from the police. Mr. E.A. Payo, Chairman of the

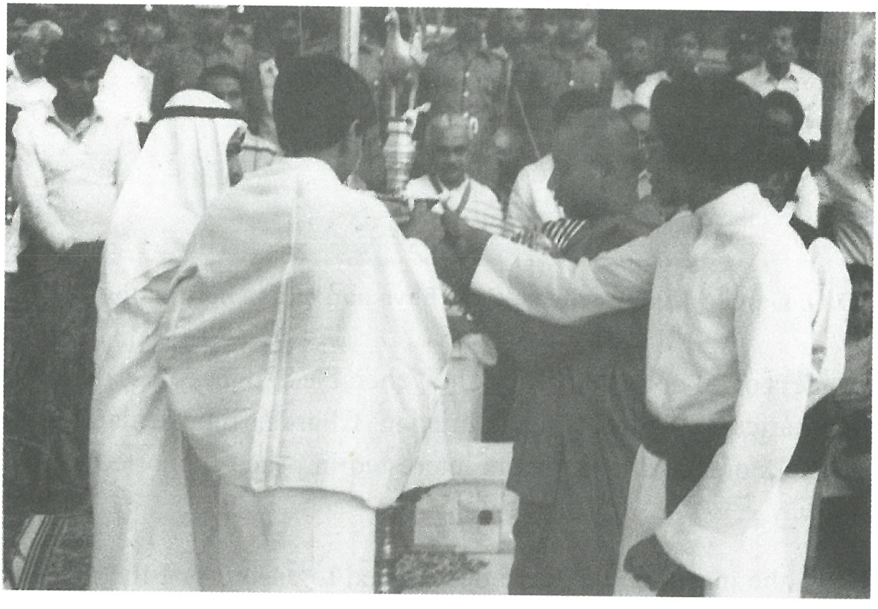
Dickoya Urban Council was one of the leading people who assisted us.

D/G. Gamini Gunawardena, E. A. Payo and others hoist national flag.

Leaders of all political parties, the Venerable Sangha, other religious dignitaries, Sisters of the Christian Church, representatives of business organizations, others interested in peace supported us in a big way.

From the inception we were determined to ensure that the pathetic incidents in the upcountry would not be repeated and were very clear

Hindu religious observances



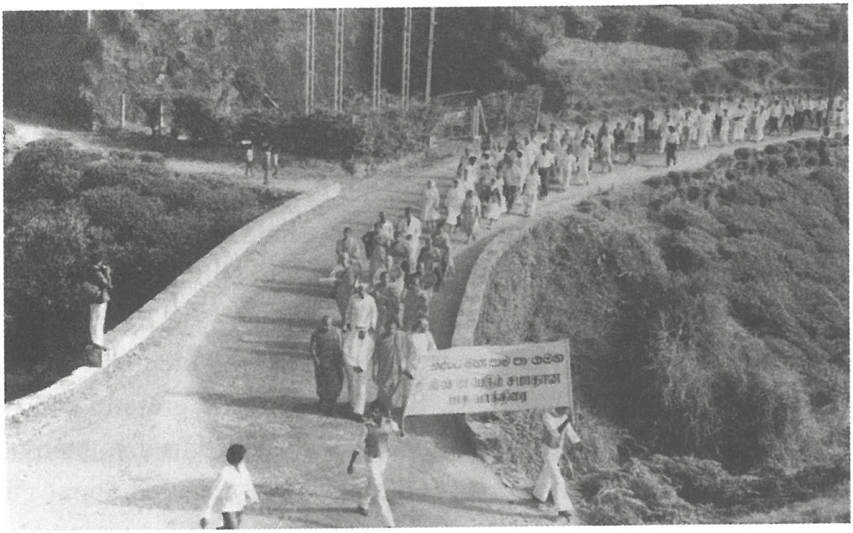
Lighting the Lamp of Peace

With Japanese Buddhist monks

in our purpose which was to bring about unity among all the communities. Success was Sarvodaya's ultimate goal. With these pure thoughts lodged in our hearts and minds, prior to commencing the peace walk we lit the traditional oil lamp in front of the Hatton Police station. We started with 4,000 and ended up with about 10,000 people. Medical Officers, ambulances, police officers were a part and parcel of the peace walk. Mr. Gamini Gunawardena and I addressed the gathering before we started the journey. I told the gathering that the objective of this peace walk was to help the central province people to unite themselves and live harmoniously and that this should be the guiding factor to be repeated with each step we take. Some people are of the opinion that violence should be dealt with by violence. Some others think that protection is possible through external force. Both are wrong. Mr. Gamini Gunawardena mentioned that thuggery has led to violence. Among the people who played a leading role in the peace walk were Ven. Siyambalgaswewa Wimalasara Thero, Chairman of the North Central Province Vanni Peace Front, Hon. S.S.A. Saman Moulavi, Muslim religious dignitary, Rev. Joseph Mirando, Catholic clergy, Ven. Itho of the Japanese Peace Dagabo. Japanese Bhikkhus were present in Hatton early morning and Ven. Ito walked in front beating the drum. After one mile walk from Hatton, at Dickoya a large gathering joined us.

We reached Maskeliya the same evening. The entire town was one mass of heads and at Norwood the peace procession had about 7,000 participants. Never was there any want of food. The peace walkers received hospitality in abundance from the people of the area, the well wishers, business people and voluntary organizations. Leaving Maskeliya we reached Nallathamby. We received a warm welcome from the people of the area. Under Sarvodaya leadership Hindu, Muslim, Christian organizations, CWC, CPWU, LJEWU, and NUW joining the peace walk was a symbol of success. All the police stations we passed on our way to Adam's Peak provided us special services. People from Hatton, Maskeliya, KudaOya, Bagawantalawa, Ginigathhena, Kirimetiya, Lindula, and Norton Bridge joined the peace walk. We did not forget to obtain the blessings at the kovils, temples and churches which we passed on our way. The Diyawadana Nilame of the Temple of the Tooth, Kandy had sent his blessings. He had also mentioned that already peace committees have been established in the areas that were conflict ridden and that our peace walk is already bringing in fruitful results. The surveys conducted revealed that the persons who were involved in the violence had repented their actions and were clamoring for peace and harmony. At

NuwaraEliya, Sarvodaya members, members of the Plantation Workers Union, Christian Workers Brotherhood, Red Cross Society, Government Plantation Workers Union and others joined the peace walk. Mr. B.S.R.Gunawardena, the Assistant Superintendent of Police, Nuwara Elya and Mr. Chandrasena Hettiarachchi, the Assistant Government Agent, NuwaraEliya gave us immense support. We received the support of the Plantation Workers Union too. Sinhala and Tamil people from the North and the East participating in the peace walk were a very special feature. The Family Gatherings held at all places of our night-stays were a great success. As all participants were full of love, care and joy there was a feeling of common well-being amongst all. In all the villages there was joyful activity, singing, but without forgetting the religious observances as well.



Hatton to Sri Pada Peace Walk

School Children Joining in Large Numbers

Clergy joining the peace walk was a great strength in re-building unity and establishing an all round balance. Young and old, strong and weak, all with compassionate hearts walking up to the sacred footprint, enhanced faith in everyone. For Hindus it is the sacred foot print of Lord Shiva, for Muslims it is the foot print of Al Mustapha. That all beliefs consolidated into one was remarkably evident. The noble intention of the peace walkers was to worship the sacred foot print and evoke blessings for peace and harmony in the country. Plantation workers in thousands had come to watch the peace procession. There was shared joy. It is recorded with grateful thanks that the police attached to the central province helped us in numerous ways including provision of food. The same is repeated about the army personnel who mingled amongst the general public quite freely. We also noticed that the fear and mistrust that the people had relating to the members of the armed forces were being obliterated. It could be

Plantation Workers will join the Peace Walk

presumed that the police might have felt the pulse of the people, by being with them. The Tamil community received us with warm hearted hospitality.

We reached Nallathamby around 7 p.m. The next five hours were spent in the climb up to the shrine. There was splendour all round which was not there in the upcountry earlier. Expelling all divisive factors we worshiped the sacred foot print. Sarvodaya volunteers and other volunteers who had come from different parts of the country tended to the weak, looked after the old and made them comfortable.

A foreign news reporter who had come to observe the peace walk had asked a female Tamil participant whether Sinhala and Tamil people could live in harmony in Sri Lanka. She responded, "We are united and live peacefully. Multi-racial, multi-religious experience at Sarvodaya is enriching. We share each other's happiness and sorrow.

Sarvodaya embodies this common human principle into its vision which is devoid of power and party politics. Sarvodaya is able to win the confidence of all communities islandwide owing to this principle of treating everyone alike."

Peace walk towads the adma's peak

The joy and contentment evident in every one who participated in our first upcountry peace walk was a result of the unity of the complex community. It was a symbol of success of the peace walk. Specially, the upcountry Tamil community blessed it with all their hearts. Since it was also our heartfelt dedication to establish peace in our country, there is no doubt that this exercise created a new feeling of pleasure and consciousness of peace.

Critics in expressing their views agreed that this most timely and important activity of Sarvodaya has laid the foundation for a non-violent struggle and psycho-social environment within Sri Lanka. Fresh hope would have been lodged in the consciousness of the participants from the North and the East who represented the Muslim and Tamil population that they will be able to stand together in unity as it was in the past.

Media announced that the unsurpassed ability of the Sarvodaya Movement made it possible to conclude a stupendous programme involving thousands of people. This is proof of the strength of Sarvodaya. It is also true that this new exercise was able to give birth to a novel collective consciousness embodying unity which is the main ingredient essential for the country's prosperity.

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ALAN SHAWN FIENSTEIN WORLD HUNGER AWARD - INTERNATIONAL AWARD IN RECOGNITION OF EFFORTS TO REDUCE WORLD HUNGER

An award is given by the Alan Shawn Fienstein Foundation for reducing Global Hunger. This is a programme of the Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, USA, initiated in 1984 for the purpose of reducing global hunger. Brown University had conducted research to ascertain the true causes for hunger in a large segment of persons and had launched various educational programmes aimed at eradicating hunger. This programme is an appreciative effort in memory of Mr. Alan Shawn Fienstein, a businessman and a philanthropist who donated USD one million for eradication of poverty. Alan Shawn Fienstein Award programme which began in 1985 gives an annual award utilizing this money.

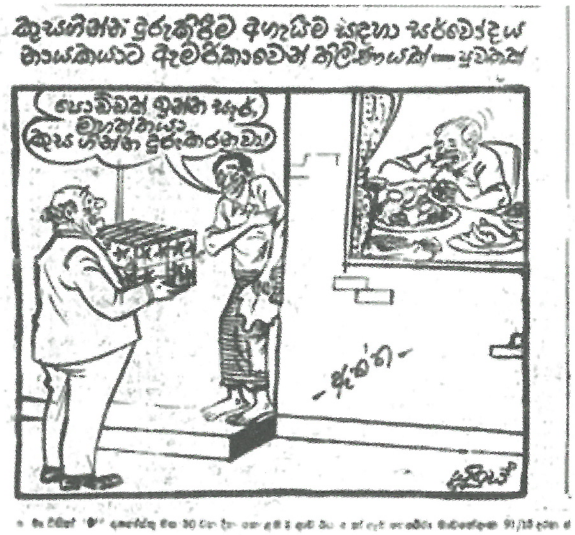
I was nominated and selected to receive the first award.

The intention behind granting of this award is to make it known to the world, for international recognition, the benevolent efforts made by persons, institutions, organizations to reduce and eradicate hunger. This is an educational programme under the guidance and direction of Prof. Robert Kates, bent on finding long term solutions to eradicate global hunger. The primary aim of the Foundation in granting this award is to recognize, honour and make it known to the world individuals, organizations, institutions which have stepped forward to annihilate hunger, identify reasons and remedial action at scientific or community level, put into practice methodologies so formulated based on the information gathered thus contributing to reduce global hunger. This is a USD 20,000 award (Sri Lankan Rs. 70,000/-). The investigating committee appointed by Browns University entrusts the task of getting nominations to a local Board who will nominate individuals from their region or their country.

Individuals from the world over, who are fully knowledgeable and skilled in the activities of the particular field are drawn into this process. I accepted the invitation extended by Mr. Howard of the Foundation. There were nominations from all over world. I was selected as the recipient of this award, mainly owing to the very successful programme Sarvodaya concluded in Mali. The government of Mali bestowed the highest honour which they could award to the Sarvodaya couple who went and worked there implementing the SILCA Project for the African people suffering from hunger and poverty. This award was not only a great strength to us but is also important enough to put on record.

At a special celebration held on 16th and 17th October, 1986 at Browns University, I was given the Alan Shawn Fienstein a Award. October 16th being the World Food Day, there were celebrations world over and the award ceremony too received publicity. The hall was filled with distinguished visitors, including 200 invitees from the Providence City. Among them were representatives from the government, universities, federal officials, senior officials of the Brown University, people belonging to various nationalities, private sector representatives and media personnel.

I was allocated 15 minutes to give a speech on world hunger. It was also planned for me to give an account of my experience to the staff and students of Brown University on the 17th. The ceremony was followed by a dinner. My travel and other expenses were borne by the Foundation.



කුසගින්න දුරුකිරීම අගැයීම සඳහා සර්වෝදය නායකයාට ඇමරිකාවෙන් තිළිණයක් — පුවතක්

පොඩ්ඩක් ඉන්න සර්, මහත්තයා කුස ගින්න දුරුකරනවා!
- ඇත්ත -

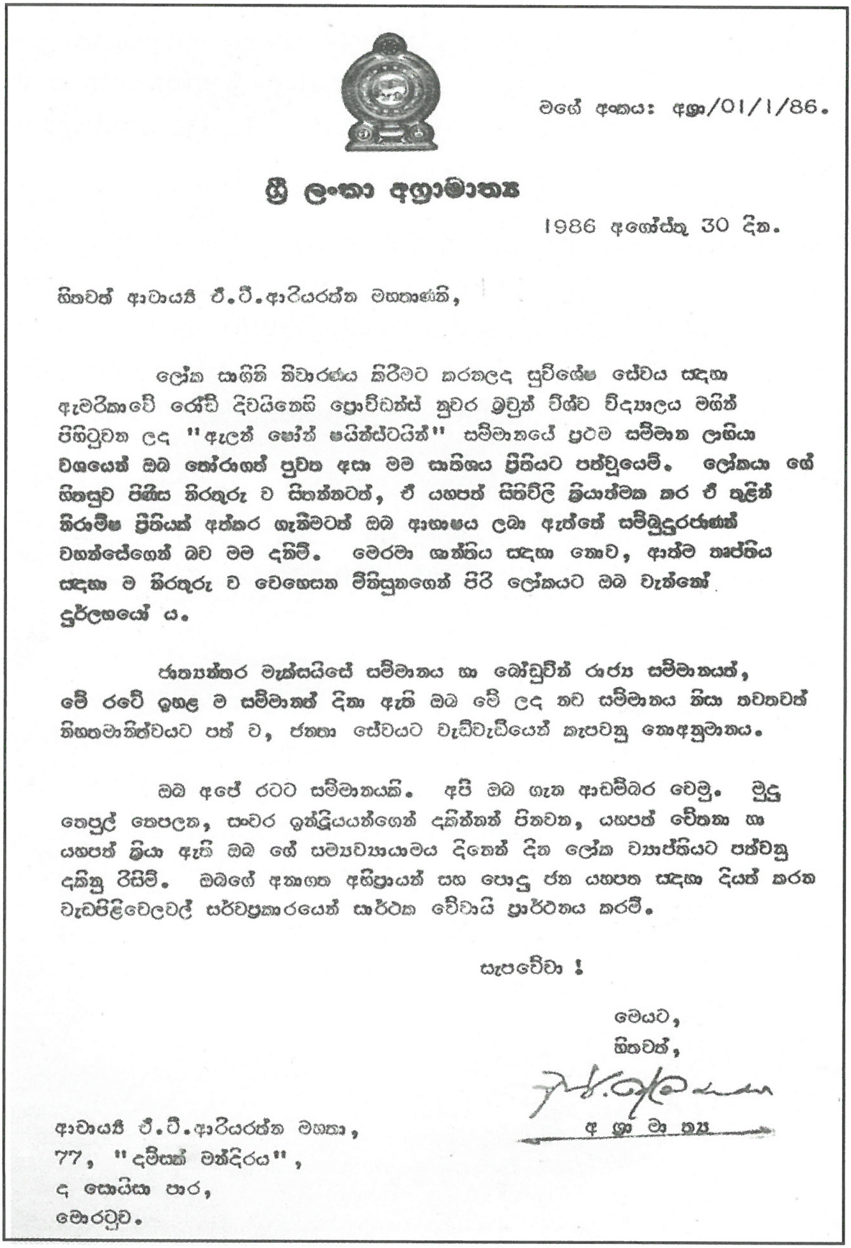
1986 අගෝස්තු 30 දින
ඇත්ත පත්‍රය

When the news that I was being nominated to receive the Alan Shawn Fienstein World Hunger Award, reached the ears of my friends and relatives, through media, telephone calls and messages of goodwill started flowing in. Some reacted in quite a different manner. There were cartoons in the newspapers subjecting me to derision. On 1986 August 30th, the Aththa paper published a cartoon depicting a table laid with roast chicken, fish and a huge dish of rice and myself chewing a chicken leg. By the side there was the picture of a gentleman carrying a big box of gifts waiting at the door step. Someone from the household walks up and says, "Just a minute sir, the gentleman is ridding himself of hunger."

What a noble deed to rid even one man's hunger? When people cannot understand this, can they ever understand what world hunger is? It is only a certain section of the society that is able to share the joy of a service that human beings of a rare nature are capable of giving the world and to recognize the wholesomeness of such an activity.

Aim of the World Hunger project is to, as far as possible, to get people be interested in helping people to be rid of hunger. Would those who use cartoons and pieces of disgraceful writing to insult the people who are engaged in wholesome, benevolent activities ever understand the real nature of things. Quite opposite to this group of people were the men in the opposite camp, the then Prime Minister, Mr. R. Premadasa and Defence Minister Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali. Their messages were of goodwill and appreciation. The cartoonist Mr. Yoonus who subjected me to severe ridicule held an exhibition of his cartoons, and honouring a request made, I arranged Sarvodaya to bear the cost of the entire exhibition.

(Letter sent by the Prime Minister)



මගේ අංකය: අග්‍රා/01/1/86.

ශ්‍රී ලංකා අග්‍රාමාත්‍ය

1986 අගෝස්තු 30 දින.

හිතවත් ආචාර්ය ඒ.ටී.ආරියරත්න මහතාණෙනි,

ලෝක සාගිනි නිවාරණය කිරීමට කරනලද සුවිශේෂ සේවය සඳහා ඇමරිකාවේ රෝඩ් දිවයිනෙහි ප්‍රොවිඩන්ස් නුවර බ්‍රවුන් විශ්ව විද්‍යාලය මගින් පිහිටුවන ලද "ඇලන් ෂෝන් ෆයින්ස්ටයින්" සම්මානයේ ප්‍රථම සම්මාන ලාභියා වශයෙන් ඔබ තෝරාගත් පුවත අසා මම සාතිශය ප්‍රීතියට පත්වූයෙමි. ලෝකයා ගේ හිතසුව පිණිස නිරතුරු ව සිතන්නටත්, ඒ යහපත් සිතිවිලි ක්‍රියාත්මක කර ඒ තුළින් නිරාමිෂ ප්‍රීතියක් අත්කර ගැනීමටත් ඔබ ආභාෂය ලබා ඇත්තේ සම්බුදුරජාණන් වහන්සේගෙන් බව මම දනිමි. මෙරමා ශාන්තිය සඳහා නොව, ආත්ම තෘප්තිය සඳහා ම නිරතුරු ව වෙහෙසන මිනිසුනගෙන් පිරි ලෝකයට ඔබ වැන්නෝ දුර්ලභයෝ ය.

ජාත්‍යන්තර මැක්සයිසේ සම්මානය හා බෝඩුවින් රාජ්‍ය සම්මානයත්, මේ රටේ ඉහළ ම සම්මානත් දිනා ඇති ඔබ මේ ලද නව සම්මානය නිසා තවතවත් නිහතමානීත්වයට පත් ව, ජනතා සේවයට වැඩිවැඩියෙන් කැපවනු නොඅනුමානය.

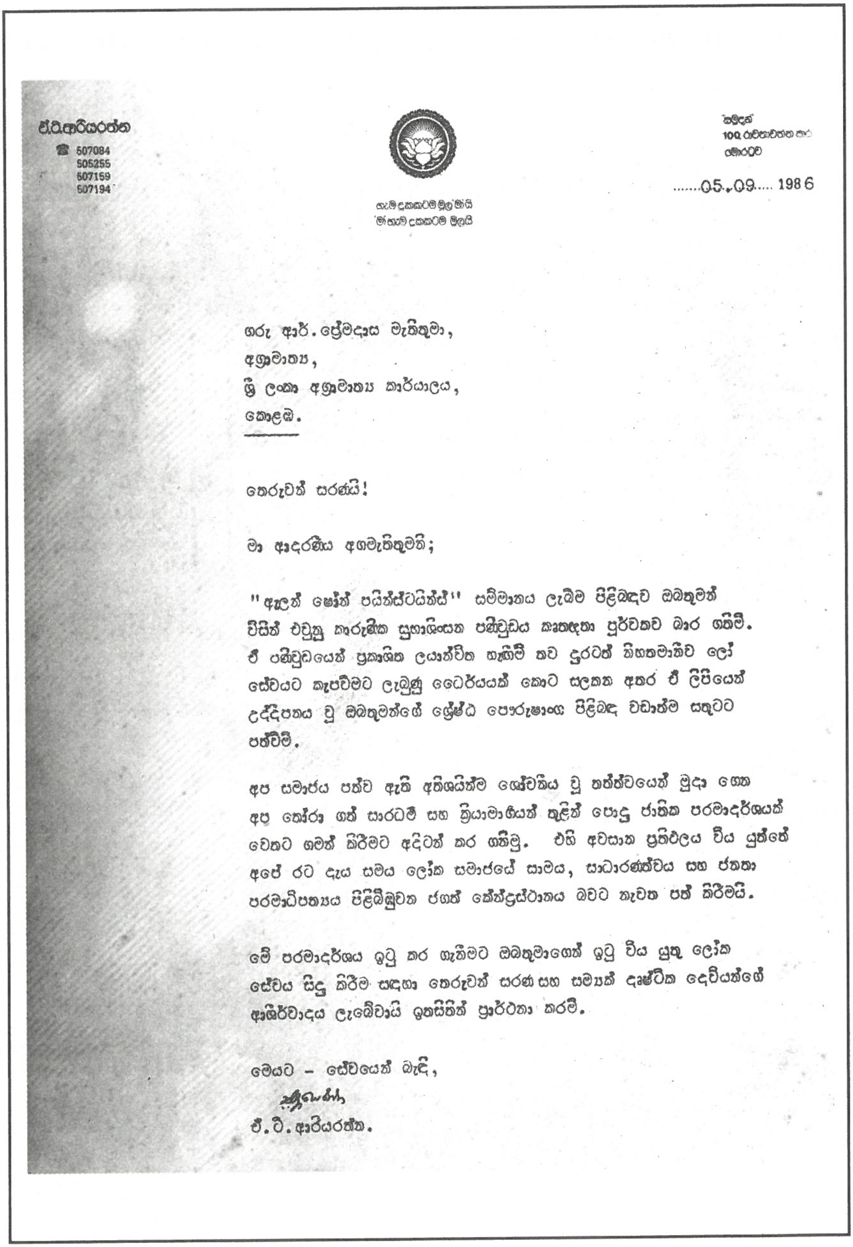
ඔබ අපේ රටට සම්මානයකි. අපි ඔබ ගැන ආඩම්බර වෙමු. මුදු තෙපුල් තෙපලන, සංවර ඉන්ද්‍රියයන්ගෙන් දකින්නන් පිනවන, යහපත් චේතනා හා යහපත් ක්‍රියා ඇති ඔබ ගේ සමාජව්‍යායාමය දිනෙන් දින ලෝක ව්‍යාප්තියට පත්වනු දකිනු රිසිමි. ඔබගේ අනාගත අභිප්‍රායන් සහ පොදු ජන යහපත සඳහා දියත් කරන වැඩපිළිවෙලවල් සර්වප්‍රකාරයෙන් සාර්ථක වේවායි ප්‍රාර්ථනය කරමි.

සැපවේවා !

මෙයට,
හිතවත්,

අග්‍රාමාත්‍ය

ආචාර්ය ඒ.ටී.ආරියරත්න මහතා,
77, "දම්සක් මන්දිරය",
ද සොයිසා පාර,
මොරටුව.



ඒ.ටී.ආරියරත්න
☎ 507084
505255
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507194

'සමුදන්'
100, රාවතාවත්ත පාර
මොරටුව

......05..09..... 1986

ගරු ආර්. ප්‍රේමදාස මැතිතුමා,
අග්‍රාමාත්‍ය,
ශ්‍රී ලංකා අග්‍රාමාත්‍ය කාර්යාලය,
කොළඹ.

තෙරුවන් සරණයි!

මා ආදරණීය අගමැතිතුමනි;

"ඇලන් ෂෝන් පයින්ස්ටයින්ස්" සම්මානය ලැබීම පිළිබඳව ඔබතුමන් විසින් එවුනු කාරුණික සුභාශිංසන පණිවුඩය කෘතඥතා පූර්වකව බාර ගනිමි. ඒ පණිවුඩයෙන් ප්‍රකාශිත ලයාන්විත හැඟීම් තව දුරටත් නිහතමානිව ලෝ සේවයට කැපවීමට ලැබුණු ධෛර්යයක් කොට සලකන අතර ඒ ලිපියෙන් උද්දීපනය වූ ඔබතුමන්ගේ ශ්‍රේෂ්ඨ පෞරුෂාංග පිළිබඳ වඩාත්ම සතුටට පත්වීමි.

අප සමාජය පත්ව ඇති අතිශයින්ම ශෝචනීය වූ තත්ත්වයෙන් මුදා ගෙන අප තෝරා ගත් සාරධම් සහ ක්‍රියාමාර්ගයන් තුළින් පොදු ජාතික පරමාදර්ශයක් වෙතට ගමන් කිරීමට අදිටන් කර ගනිමු. එහි අවසාන ප්‍රතිඵලය විය යුත්තේ අපේ රට දැය සමය ලෝක සමාජයේ සාමය, සාධාරණත්වය සහ ජනතා පරමාධිපත්‍යය පිළිබිඹුවන ජගත් කේන්ද්‍රස්ථානය බවට නැවත පත් කිරීමයි.

මේ පරමාදර්ශය ඉටු කර ගැනීමට ඔබතුමාගෙන් ඉටු විය යුතු ලෝක සේවය සිදු කිරීම සඳහා තෙරුවන් සරණ සහ සම්‍යක් දෘෂ්ටික දෙවියන්ගේ ආශිර්වාදය ලැබේවායි ඉතසිතින් ප්‍රාර්ථනා කරමි.

මෙයට - සේවයෙන් බැඳි,

ඒ. ටී. ආරියරත්න.

Message of goodwill sent by the Defence Minister Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali.

10th September 1986

National Defence Minister and
Deputy Defence Minister
Lalith Athulathmudali PC, M.P

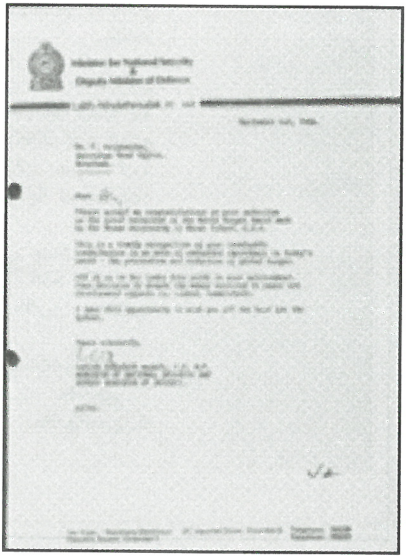
Dear Ari,

Please accept my best wishes on the occasion of your receiving the first Eradication of World Hunger Award given by the Brown University, Rhode Island, U.S.A. This award is a timely one given in recognition of your priceless efforts in reducing and eradicating hunger. As Sri Lankans we are proud of your achievement.

It is indeed praiseworthy that you have decided to use the money for development efforts. I wish you all the best in your future endeavors too.

Yours truly

Lalith Athulathmudali, M. P
National Defence Minister and
Deputy Defence Minister



(My reply to Minister Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali)

8th September 1986

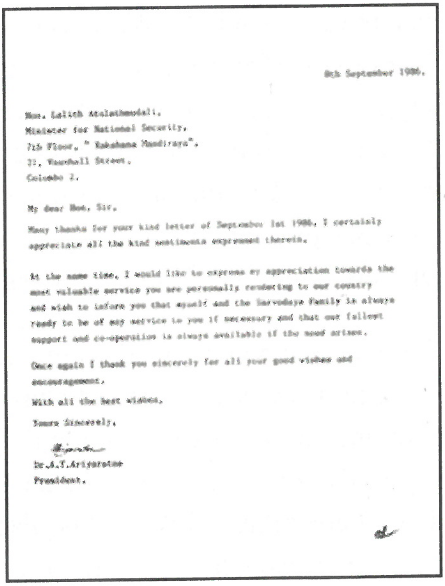
Hon'ble Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali
National Defence Minister,
7th Floor, Insurance Building
21, Vauxhall Street
COLOMBO 2.

My dear Hon'ble Minister,

I wish to state that Sarvodaya and I, are and will be at your service in your noble work as and when the opportunity arises. I thank you very much for your efforts and wish you all the best.

The award money I received was gifted to Sarvodaya for the well being of everyone.

A. T. Ariyaratne
PRESIDENT



8th September 1986.

Hon. Lalith Atulathmudali,
Minister for National Security,
7th Floor, " Rakshana Mandiraya",
21, Vauxhall Street,
Colombo 2.

My dear Hon. Sir,

Many thanks for your kind letter of September 1st 1986. I certainly appreciate all the kind sentiments expressed therein.

At the same time, I would like to express my appreciation towards the most valuable service you are personally rendering to our country and wish to inform you that myself and the Sarvodaya Family is always ready to be of any service to you if necessary and that our fullest support and co-operation is always available if the need arises.

Once again I thank you sincerely for all your good wishes and encouragement.

With all the best wishes,

Yours Sincerely,

Dr.A.T.Ariyaratne
President.

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FRIENDS I MET IN SINGAPORE

It is 17th November 1986. I am seated in aircraft 312 Airlanka, to leave for Singapore to attend a workshop on development communication. At 1.15 a.m. the aircraft is due to take off. We are in the air now.

Last evening Neetha left for England. The British High Commission had refused to grant the entry visa to England, to Charika's (Charika is my daughter) maid who was to look after the baby Janantha, Charika's son. The reason for this refusal was the information the British High Commission received about this particular maid having worked at the residence of a brother of the President of Sri Lanka. This information was supplied by a nephew of the President. This is a total lie. Mary alias Dhanawathie Waththege had not worked anywhere else other than in my household. We had communications with the British High Commission from July but to no avail. Last week we met the British High Commissioner Mr. James Stewart and gave him all the relevant details. I met the High Commissioner this morning too on my way to the airport. This situation has arisen due to the false information given by a person named Kannangara, who has managed to deceive the Officers of the High Commission resulting in our present predicament.

The workshop concluded on the 22nd. I will leave for Sri Lanka this evening. I consider it useful to have been afforded the opportunity of listening to various professionals on development communication, supportive arms of development communication and getting to know them personally while I was also able to explain to them about Sarvodaya and what it does in Sri Lanka.

I met Mr. Nevile Jayaweera after a long time. He delivered the keynote address. Currently, he holds the position of a director in the World Communication Centre, England. I was closely associated with him while he was the Government Agent of Vavuniya and then the Director General of Radio Ceylon. He was an active participant for the 1964 Sarvodaya Shramadana Camp. Prior to the 1971 insurgency, he arranged for me to speak at a large gathering held in the Vavuniya Urban Council Hall. While many government officials hid themselves in fear, he bravely came forward, risking his life, helped the police to maintain law and order. After that, this was the first occasion I was able to spend a few days with him.

Dr. Sarath Amunugama, Co-General Secretary of the World View International was another person who attended the workshop. During the time when Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike was not very friendly towards us, he served as the Director of Rural Development for a short time. I can still recall how he helped us. We needed Government approval for a donation by NOVIB, Netherlands. We were certain that the Minister would not give his approval. Through Mr. Dharma Gunasinghe, I obtained the letter of approval from Mr. Sarath Amunugama. Persons of this caliber are very rare in the government sector. He was my friend then and now too. I liked the speech he delivered for the Conference.

Two other persons who contributed very well at the Conference were Mr. Nikahetiya of the World View International and Mr. Anura Gunasekera, Director General of Rupavahini. I pondered for a moment how well the skills of these individuals could be made use of under well organized government machinery.

I was able to learn much from the lectures delivered by Prof. James Halowen from England, Prof. John Lent from Temple University, America, Prof. Ms. Nora Cabral from the University of Philippines and the professors from India.

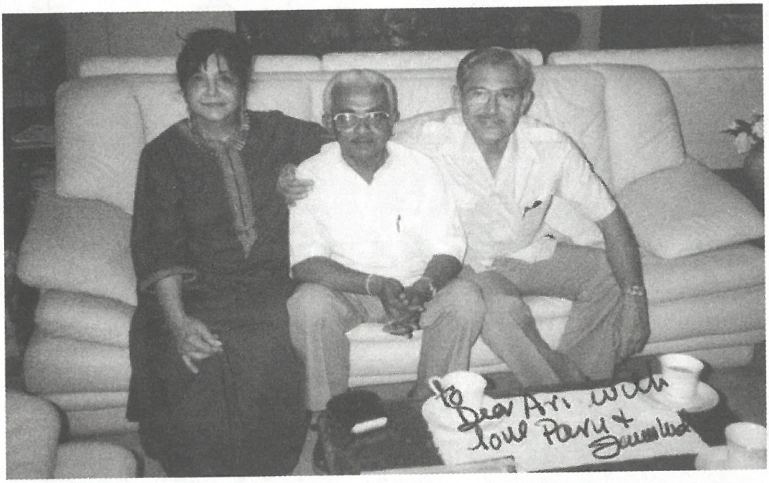
In many of countries where I go, I have Sri Lankan friends and relatives. But, apart from the two homes of Vinitha Nangi and Vajira Nangi in Canada, I do not spend a night anywhere else. Nevertheless, the Mahinda and Thilani Thenabadu family is special to me. On all of my visits to Singapore, this couple meets me at the airport and I am their guest. I am also very fond of their small daughters. My visits to their home are very pleasurable. On this particular occasion the organization that invited me had arranged my stay, at their expense, in Royal Hotel, but I opted to be the guest of the Thenabadu family. Thilani nangi had gone to the extent of preparing various salads, green leaf, garlic, lotus root and had made special food knowing I am a diabetic. I call her Vedahamine (female ayurvedic doctor). I feel that someday I will have the opportunity of reciprocating their hospitality.

Mr. Jamshed Fozda is my very beloved friend, a permanent resident of Singapore. Parvathi, his wife and he treat me as a brother of theirs. Fozda home is the alternate place to Mahinda Thenabadu family for my stay during my visits to Singapore. Children of Mr. and Mrs. Fozda live in various parts of the world. Jamshed is a strong Bahai leader, an electronics engineer who is also a great philosopher. He has written and published many books on Buddha and Bahai Religion.

Fozda and Parvathi lived in Sri Lanka sometime back. They were very close friends of my family and joined Sarvodaya in many of its activities.Mr. Jamshed Fozda took the lead in persuading the Prime

Minister Mr. R. Premadasa to declare a multi-religious day and also have a special stamp issued.

Whenever I pass Singapore, I make it a point, at least to talk to them from the Singapore Airport.


to Dear Ari with love Paru + Jamshed

Jamshed and parvathi Fozda with me

Jamshed and parvathi Fozda with Neetha

Mr. & Mrs. Fozda with Suwasetha Children

Mr. & Mrs. Fozda in Vishva Nikethan

THE INFINITE ENERGY

On Wesak Full Moon Poya Day 1987

When Sri Dalada Maligawa area and Mahamaluwa area was declared a sacred area.

01. Ven. Palipana Sri Chandra Nandabhidana Maha Nayaka Thero
02. Ven. Sirimalwatte Ananda Maha Nayaka Thero
03. Ven. Prof. Warakawe Dhammaloka Thero
04. Diyawadana Nilame Mr. Neranjan Wijeratne
05. Most Ven. Sirimalwatte Anandabidana Thero
06. Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne
07. Mr. Thissa Wijeratna
08. Mr. Somapala Liyanage
09. Mr. Henry Amarasinghe
10. Municipal Council Member Mr. Kulathunga

Today 13th May 1987, is Vesak Full moon Day. After spending three days in Vavuniya I spent last night at Matale Sarvodaya Centre. At the invitation of the Diyawadana Nilame, Niranjan Wijeratne I came to the Temple of the Tooth at 7am today and participated in the simple ceremony which declared the premises of the Temple of the Tooth as a sacred area. The Head of the Malwathu Chapter, the Ven. Sirimalwatte Ananda Maha Nayake Thero, the Head of the Asgiri Chapter the Ven. Palipane Chandananda Maha Nayake Thero, Mr. Neranjan Wijeratne, Mr. Tissa Wijeratne and I lit the traditional oil lamp.

I worshipped the Sacred Tooth Relic, meditated for a few minutes and started on my return journey. It was painful for me to observe that there were less than 25 devotees at the temple premises. On the return journey I visited Kelaniya Temple, paid homage to the Buddha. Vinya my son too joined me in the five day trip. Kelaniya Temple premises was full of devotees.

My mind these days was fully occupied with the programme scheduled to be launched on June 3rd from the Temple of Tooth, Kandy, via Matale, Dambulla, Mihintale, and Sacred City Anuradhapura and conclude the activity on the morning of 11th June. This programme is a sacred activity to generate through human beings spiritual energies which would touch the Infinite energy. My visit to Kandy and Matale on the 9th and Anuradhapura on the 10th attending the organizing committee meetings and spending two days in the North were related to the June 3rd event.

After worshipping the Kelaniya temple, on my return home I composed the following song:

May Nature's energies, Collective life energies, Infinite energies
Converting into loving compassionate thought waves
Bring in Prosperity and contentment
Space earth sun moon and stars energizing woods
Mingled with celestial energies with purity of human beings
All combine generating rays of peace
May Natures ....
Siri Dalada (Sacred Tooth Relic) Sacred Bo Tree
Dagabo Ruwanweli all combine in divine grace
Bringing peace and harmony
May nature's energies....
Tissamaharamaya Kirivehera
Miyuguna Girihandu all strength together
Preserved on mountain peak Samanala
Combined energies making the heart throb
With strength birthing rays of peace wonderful

The establishment of Anuradhapura Protection Society in 1960 laid the foundation for the Anuradhapura ancient city area to be declared as a sacred zone. At the invitation of the Government Agent, Mr Nissanka Wijeratne, I too participated. I vividly remember him accompanying me to the stage and the promise I made that in December the preservation activities would begin with our volunteers at work. I kept to the promise. It is strange how Mr Nissanka Wijeratne invited me then and his son Mr. Neranjan Wijeratne invited me this morning.

When Neranjan was born in 1956 in Kandy, I was observing Ata Sil (eight precepts) in Anuradhapura commemorating 2500th Buddha Jayanthiya. After thirty years, both of us are planning to conduct a week full of spiritual activity stretching from Kandy to Anuradhapura.

Next morning I requested Amaradeva and Sunil Sarath Perera to set my song to music and record it.

A week full of spiritual energy

Starting from Kandy Senkadagala, in front of Siri Dalada Maligawa (Temple of the Tooth), at 1.30pm tomorrow, the spiritual week would commence. I spent the previous night at the residence of Mr. Neranjan Wijeratne, the Diyawadana Nilame. There was incessant rain, thunder and lightning on our way from Colombo to Kandy, driving was very slow. Bhikkhus were murdered by terrorists at Aranthalawe and we were not certain whether the government would impose a curfew. Nevertheless, we continued with our plans.

By 1.00 p.m. a large gathering of people, coming in processions from various directions, were in front of the Siri Dalada Temple. We very quickly made all the final arrangements for the event to take place at 1.30 p.m. Headed by Gunapala Malli other organizers had done an impeccable job of organizing the event. I am fortunate to have with me such faithful and humble youth.

By 1.30 pm the entire area, the roads and temple premises were a single patch of heads. Everyone was seated in meditation posture. Rt. Rev. Bishop of Kandy Viyana Fernando, Rev. Fathers and Rev.

Mothers, about 85 were present. The Diyawadana Nilame and I were seated by the side of the stage. Ven. Uduwawela Chandananda Thero who was in charge of the religious service recited the five precepts for the gathering to observe. I got on to the stage and conducted a one-hour meditation. We had printed about 100,000 leaflets for distribution and I had recorded here the meditation technique adopted.

On account of the very heavy rain the previous night and the heavily overcast sky the following day; many people were getting ready for the meditation with opened umbrellas. The first thing I did was to adopt a firm conviction that not a drop of rain should fall until we completed our week-long walking meditation and with that resolve I requested all the people to fold their umbrellas. All of them folded their umbrellas. We encountered rain again only after returning on the 11th having completed all our activities.

No one has, to his recollection seen a gathering so vast in front of the Siri Dalada Maligawa (Temple of the Tooth Relic), peacefully meditating. It was of more significance as it was a multi-religious meditation. The same day, Neranjan and I participated in a service at St. Anthony's Church and a religious offering at Amman Kovil. Early morning on 4th June we attended a reception at the Mosque in Akurana. We began our peace walk from Puran Appu Memorial, 1 ½ miles away from Matale Town amidst joyful welcome from the people. There were thousands participating in the peace walk and thousands more in silence watching us. People congregating themselves in Christian churches and Mosques received us with love and kindness and prayed for our success.The peace walk was concluded at the Aloka Viharaya that day.

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சமாதான ஆர்வலம்
MEDITATION
TO RELEASE SPIRITUAL ENERGY FOR NATIONAL PEACE

Commence of the Peace walk from the sacred Temple of the Tooth

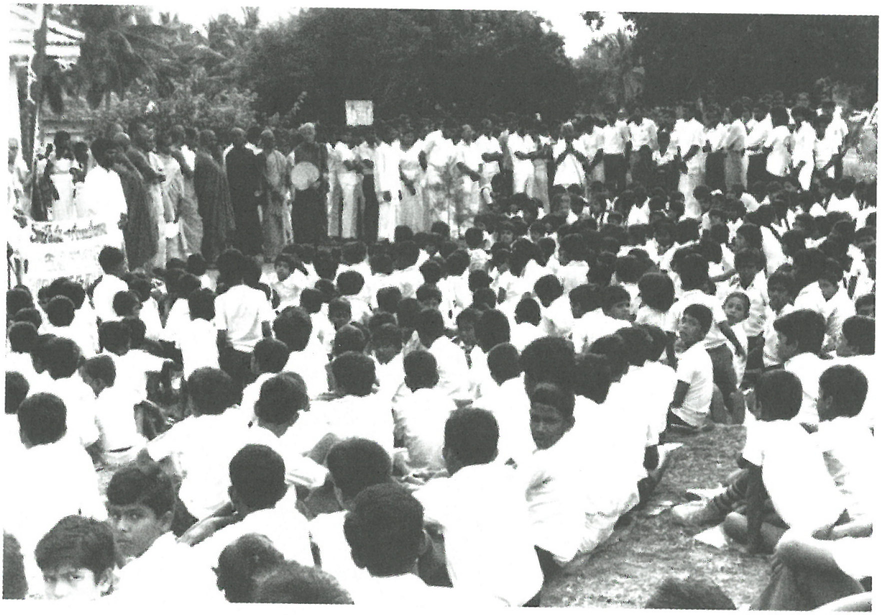
All religious meditation

Meditation in front of sacred Temple of the Tooth

Shanthi Sena participants at the peace walk

While I was at lunch at Aloka Viharaya, Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hameed telephoned me to request help for the people in Jaffna, who had no proper food for five days, whether it was possible for me to arrange some food to be sent through Sarvodaya. I informed the Hon. Minister to speak to the Ven. Nayake Thero at Vavuniya Temple.

We spent the night at Dambulla Raja Maha Viharaya. Quite an unexpected gathering was there at Dambulla to join our meditation. The Ven. Pandit Inamaluwe Sumangala Maha Nayake Thero had made all arrangements to precision. H.P. Somasiri Malli acting in the capacity of organizer Matale District, had performed the duties entrusted in a very efficient manner.



participants at meditation

Peace walk next day began from Dambulla Temple. The dividing line between Anuradhapura and Matale is the Mirisgoniyawa Junction, where a large number of leading people in Anuradhapura had come to receive us. Headed by Mr. T. K. Dassanayake, Government Agent Anuradhapura, the government officials gave us their maximum support. I addressed the people who had come from both districts. People from Anuradhapura provided sweetmeats, fruits and kiribath (milk rice). People from neighbouring villages brought in various food items. I spoke to the peace walkers and decided that I would be silent after that and told them about the importance of adhering to noble silence during the peace walk.

Later on I came to know that many people had gathered to extend their good wishes. I was invited to speak at the Kekirawa Town and a poor mother offered me a glass of orange juice. I made it clear that there was no other way to peace than the spiritual way. I told them that hatred against one another would invariably result in pools of blood in the future. Amidst sadu naada (expression of compassionate joy) I told the gathering that only spiritual energies released from compassionate hearts, would help bring about peace.

Sarvodaya District Centre at Kekirawa had prepared lunch for us, Ariyasena Muthuporuwa Malli organizing everything in the most appropriate manner. Someone tapped me on my shoulder, to find it was the District Minister Mr. Mahindasoma. He said, "Doctor, when I came to Mirisgoniya Junction you had begun the peace walk. From there I walked behind you to this spot. To the best of my memory, I have not walked such a long distance, so far. To begin with, I felt fatigued which disappeared later. I am now going home and shall join you in the evening." Not only the District Minister, but also government officials, opposition party leaders, political leaders, all joined in the peace walk. These people have been listening to the education programmes the Rajarata Service conducted. Radio Ceylon gave descriptions from Colombo. M/s. Siri Radanpola, Jothipala Thebuwana and Bradman Jayaweera of the Rajarata Service spoke to us from time to time and obtained our views. It surprised me to hear an interview I had given about the peace walk being broadcasted by Radio Ceylon. I did not give such an interview. This programme was prepared, using a speech I gave prior to the peace walk.

With Diyawadana Nilame on the way

Next day's peace walk did not begin from a highly populated area. We spent the night at the Thalaguli Temple, which was about one kilometer from the main road. It is a historical spot inside a jungle area. The place had environmental serenity. We were getting ready for

We were welcomed all the way from Kandy to Anuradhapura

the night meditation when I saw a number of army personnel, amongst who was Mr. Ananda Weerasekra, a student of mine. He informed me that they had received information that terrorists were getting ready to attack the peace walkers and the army had a security cordon around the temple premises. Whatever the information that the army had received, it was impossible for anyone to attack a gathering such as the peace walkers, of which I was certain of. The spiritual energies released through compassionate hearts are more powerful than weaponry and advised him to send the army personnel back.

We headed towards Mihintale the next day. There were thousands of devotees who passed us in pilgrimage on the Poson Full moon Day. Some got off their vehicles, sent the vehicles away and joined the peace walk. As we had quite a large number of participants I enquired whether there was any problem of providing sufficient food for all. Harsha Navaratne replied, "No Sir, as many as there are people with us, there are people who bring in food items to be served."Amidst Sadu Naada of thousands of devotees, we reached the centre court of Mihintale. The meditation that night was of a very decisive nature. There was absolute stillness though the gathering was large. We began the peace meditation, lodged in our hearts the noble wish for peace to prevail, across our motherland. Everyone went into deep meditation with one-pointedness. We collectively released to the universe, energies compressed into a spiritual mass of consciousness which would act as a buffer zone against the thoughts of hatred forced upon nature. I felt that the earth was trembling around me and heard the hum of thousands of bees in my ears. This was coming from a distant place and approaching me and felt it striking me as if with an

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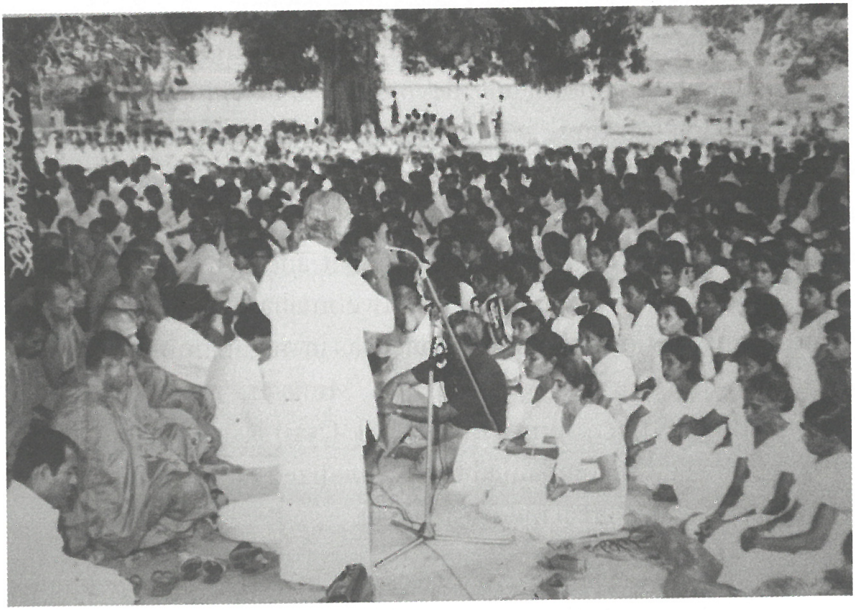
Welcome Banners

Peace march through matale



Addressing a peace gathering

iron rod. I found support on Rev. Fr. Tissa Balasooriya's lap. I heard Diyawadana Nilame saying something quite aloud addressing me. Rev. Father was stroking my head and praying. After a few minutes I opened my eyes. Rev. Fr. Tissa Balasooriya whispered at my ear, "Doctor, evil forces cannot defeat the strength from spiritual energies. Truth wins. Doctor, our efforts are successful." I heard the Venerable Maha Sangha, surrounding me, chanting pirith.

After lunch, the peace walkers conducted a meditation session on top of the Mihintale rock and started the journey to Anuradhapura. Leaving a space of three feet, only two people to a row, the peace procession began. It was only when we reached Anuradhapura, I realized that the last lap of our peace walk was from Mihintale. The peace walk portrayed a scene of serenity and beauty. We paid homage to the Sri Maha Bo Tree and worshipped Ruwanwelimahaseya around 7pm. In hundreds of thousands, devotees clad in white were seated in the meditation posture, ready for the peace meditation, in the Salapathala Maluwa. (Area immediately around the Dagabo) I began the peace meditation seated towards the eastern direction from Ruwanwelimahaseya. I met the President and Prime Minister and requested them to arrive at the Ruwanwelimahaseya after we began the peace meditation. When everyone was in meditation, I went up to the steps, met the President, Prime Minister, Mrs. Premadasa, Commanding Officer, Joint Forces, Col. Cyril Ranatunge and other officials who had accompanied them. I realized that all of them were beneficiaries of this great meritorious act.

The last phase of the peace walk was spent in step by step meditation for over one hour. I felt emptiness within me accompanied with great strength. I stretched my hands up towards the top of the Dagaba and

at Mihintale

Leaving Mihintale

On The Way To Anuradhapura

Reaching Anuradhapura

spoke thus. "Spiritual energy is truth. There is nothing that can defeat it. Please show me a sign symbolizing my faith." Around the top of the Dagaba I saw, my eyes wide open, the seven colours of the universe. I worshipped saying "sadu sadu". The hundred thousands of devotees followed suit. I chanted the Loving Kindness Sutra and put into the universe my intent, "May the leaders rule abiding in the ten virtuous precepts." With this wish the peace walk ended. After concluding the peace walk and coming down the steps along with the distinguished personages, we heard a deafening noise. That noise, we came to know later was the crumbling down of the Mirisawetiya re-building work.

President J.R. Jayewardene held my hands and extended his good wishes. Prime Minister Premadasa appreciated the peace walk and invited me to the pirith ceremony at Mirisawetiya. As we had to keep to the schedule, I politely refused the invitation of the Prime Minister.

With President J. R. Jayawardene, Prime Minister R. Premadasa, Diyawadana Nilame Neranjan Wijeratne

Diyawadana Nilame Neranjan Wijeratne participated in the Mirisawetya religious ceremony.

We were relaxing in the precincts of the Dagaba. The Diyawadana Nilame, came rushing through the crowd, holding his head in his hands, and falling on the ground in front of me started speaking with great agitation. "All is over. All is over. The Mirisavetiya Dagaba has split into two from the Devata Kotuwa."

He said, "All is over. All is over, Doctor. The Devata Kotuwa of the Mirisawetiya split into two. This happened when the invitation to the gods was being chanted. No one is injured. Minister Gamini Dissanayake is stunned. Doctor, why do such things happen?" I

Audio unit of Sarvodaya recorded the peace walk

stroked Neranjan's head, and said, “Malli, Mirisaswetiya will be repaired. Mirisawetiya was built by a great, honest, upright king who was benevolent. These sacred things cannot be re-built with dishonest, stained hands. Even if built so, they are of no use. Falsehood is short-lived. Truth once it surfaces, though, with difficulty, lasts forever. Do you remember my telling you, that spiritual effort is embodied with the truth? I also wanted a symbol, I said.”

"Oh! Doctor, what is going to happen to the country?"

"The country cannot be ruled by evil methods. When trying to do this, everything gets lost. There is going to be a tremendous flow of blood in our motherland. The spiritual energy that is there by the sacred visits of the Buddha three times should not be allowed to be washed away. Violence will be permanently annihilated from our island. That is the result of spiritual energy sending out to the universe through our compassionate efforts. I do not know when it is going to happen. But I am certain about the fact." I stretched my hands upwards and worshipped. The Diyawadana Nilame too followed suit.

Peace Meditation

First Stage

1. Sit in a comfortable posture. Sit comfortably so that you are able to maintain the same posture for about one hour. Make sure that your head, neck and the spine are straight. From time to time find out whether the posture is right, if not correct it.

2. Keep your right palm on the left palm so that the two thumbs touch each other. Close your eyes, if not close them half. Maintain a soft smile.

3. Start from the big toe, concentrate on the muscles, from organ to organ and keep relaxing. In this manner get the entire body into a relaxed state. Body should be straight, but not stiff.

4. While taking in deep breaths imagine that infinite energies enter your inner being. While exhaling send out any negative energies if there are. Repeat this three times.

5. After that keep your mind on the natural breath. When inhaling be aware that it is inhaling. When exhaling be aware that it is exhaling. If it is a long breath be aware that it is a long breath. If it is a short breath be aware that it is a short breath. Not a single breath should

be taken without you being aware of it. If your concentration shifts on to an object, get the mind back to breathing in and breathing out. When breathing in and breathing out, a sensation is felt at some point at the tip of your nose. Identify that spot and keep your mind on that particular spot. Be aware of the breath touching the spot. When this is practiced the mind does not wonder about and one-pointedness is cultivated. Even if the mind wonders a bit if you are able to get it back on to the particular spot of your concentration and maintain your concentration there, you possess the ability to receive spiritual energies and the rays of compassion you generate are able to reach all sentient beings. Being aware of this you now get on to the 2nd stage of the peace meditation.

Second Stage

1. Think in this manner. My body is light and relaxed. I am connected to universal energies as I breathe in; the natural energies enter my body and make me strong. My mind is light. Similar to my body, my mind too is well and secure. Jealousies and anger should be thinned out and evaporated. Selfishness should be erased. Now my mind and body are well and secure.

   In this manner, repeat for mother, father, wife, husband, children, people of Sri Lanka, everyone in the world, all living beings. Begin from the self and extend loving kindness to the living beings of the entire planet. In between keep concentrating on the breathing in and breathing out.

2. In order to reinforce the spiritual strength collected so, think of the Buddha, His doctrine and the compassionate nature of the Sangha

and intend that these energies should reach you and be lodged within you. People belonging to other faiths, please think of your great teacher and draw into yourself the spiritual energies your great teacher possessed. While breathing in, intend that these compassionate energies reach your inner being and are lodged in you. While breathing out think of any divisive factors within you and send these thoughts out with the outing-breath. Imagine the entire world possess the same compassionate energies as you do.

3. Intend that the sacred, positive energies surrounding the Siri Daladawa get lodged into your mind and body strengthening your power of loving kindness. Also feel and absorb the divine power of gods to further strengthen your power of loving kindness.

Third Stage

1. Think that race, caste, religion, party, language are subtle methods to divide people. Contemplate on the sublime condition it would bring to the entire globe if people are happy, prosperous, peaceful, virtuous, loving and kind and that no one welcomes fear, harassment, loss, limitation and violence into their lives. Wish for the others what you wish for yourself, love, peace, harmony and goodwill.

2. Contemplate and repeat within you that all human beings and other beings living in our homeland, Sri Lanka, from Dondra to Point Pedro, Puttlam to Batticaloa are blessed with thoughts, deeds and actions of love, peace and harmony. Repeat this wish three times.

3. Wait in one-pointedness for 20 minutes with the single thought that your consciousness be fed with an abundance of selflessness, loving kindness strengthening the mind towards everything that is of good nature.

4. At this stage of the meditation you will automatically feel a compassionate strength, never before experienced by you, that you are here to help alleviate suffering of others, help chase fear away from others, and help bring solace to the sad hearts.

5. Thereafter, in order to send out to the universe, through your efforts, the rays of spiritual energies, intend thus: "My consciousness, the storehouse of love, compassion, goodwill, peace, harmony and joy is the centre through which I emanate rays of these qualities of good report to people around me, and spread out to all four corners of Sri Lanka, as a fountain allowing cool water to flow in all directions. " Meditate in this manner for about ten minutes.

6. Further, put your will resolutely that no evil force, violent action, resentful deed can ever penetrate into the pure spiritual energy that is part of you. The evil thoughts that are lodged in the minds and hearts of some people should be dissolved by the true nature of the compassionate spiritual energies that you have been able to accumulate through meditation. Having this thought, engage in meditation with the hope of a prosperous, harmonious and peaceful environment for all to live in Sri Lanka.

7. Meditate and wish that people in various parts of the globe who meditate during this spiritual week also add to the compassionate, spiritual strength we have built.

8. Look at your body with your mind. Keep the body relaxed and light. Watch in silence how your breath touches the spot at the tip of your nose. While breathing in, imagine that the compassionate spiritual energies of everyone else entering your body. Now, all energies within you are pure and strong. While breathing out wish that all beings be filled with the compassionate spiritual energies that you send out with the out breath. While on this exercise, send out to all living beings on this planet love and kindness for harmony and peace. In between breathing in and out think of every one living in Sri Lanka and wish for them to receive the compassionate rays of spiritual energy. Wish that the collective pure energy generated by as many as thousands of people meditating, to be spread across Sri Lanka for non-violent and justice filled living for Sri Lankans.

(At the end of each hourly meditation, the following wish in verse form is chanted)

May there be timely rains
May there be thriving agriculture
May people be happy and joyous
May the rulers be benevolent
And may the world be filled with prosperity

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THE DHAMMA IS IN THE HEART AND NOT IN THE TONGUE
THE PILGRIMAGE TO BURMA

As President of the Asia and South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education, from yesterday I have been participating in the Executive Committee Meeting held in Bangkok Airport Hotel on 1987 July 21. Prof. W. M. K. Wijetunge as the General Secretary and Mr. Ananda Jayawardena, as Secretary are attending the same meeting. This evening the meeting will be over. Tomorrow I am scheduled to address the annual general meeting of the Adult Education Institute of Thailand. On the 23rd, for the first time I will be visiting Burma.

The purpose of my visit to Burma is to meet Ven. Saaya Theid Dhamma Ashin Ghnanika Sayadaw Thero who is meditating for peace to be established in Sri Lanka. I brought with me two sacred relics and a sapling from the Sri Maha Bodhi, a model of Ruwanwelimahaseya in which the two sacred relics are meant to be placed. Air Lanka Manager, Mr. Abeytunge, Mrs. Abeytunge, Mr. Serasinghe from the Embassy, Dr. Mrs Thin Thin's husband Dr. Senlin were there. Lalitha Nangi and Ralph Houtman Malli who hosted me in their home in Bangkok, were there.

Today, 1987 July 23, Dr. Samlin and Mr. Abeytunga will take me to the airport. I am on my way to Burma to meet the Ven. Sayaa Theid Ashin Ghanika Sayadaw Thero, hand over the Bo sapling and the sacred relics. Dr. Mrs. Thin Thin will meet me there and make all the necessary arrangements.

During my three day visit to Bangkok I met many specialists on adult education in Thailand. They appreciated the lectures I delivered. In Thailand too, I received the usual love, care and attention that I am used to receiving from whoever they be, and, wherever I go. This made me very happy. Wije and Ananda will leave for Sri Lanka this evening. I reached Rangoon after 50 minutes of air travel. Immigration officers came up to the aircraft and paid their homage to the Bo sapling. A special bus took me to the building and the officers performed their official duties quickly. They made room for a large gathering that was there to worship the sacred relics and also receive me.

Dr. Thin Thin with the Relics Casket

It was a big procession of vehicles from the airport. Dr. Mrs. Thin Thin carried the two sacred relics in a specially made container and I carried the Bo sapling with both hands. Dr. Thin Thin and I sat in the front seats. Buddhists flags were hung by the road side. All those who saw us did not fail to worship in our direction.

The first stop of the procession was at the famous Shwe Dagon Dagaba in Rangoon. Male and female Buddhist devotees, bhikkhus and bhikkhunis worshipped and received us. Devotees lined up on either side of the road, worshipped the sacred relics and the Bo sapling in kneeling posture. Undoubtedly, this sight would bring joy to anyone's heart.

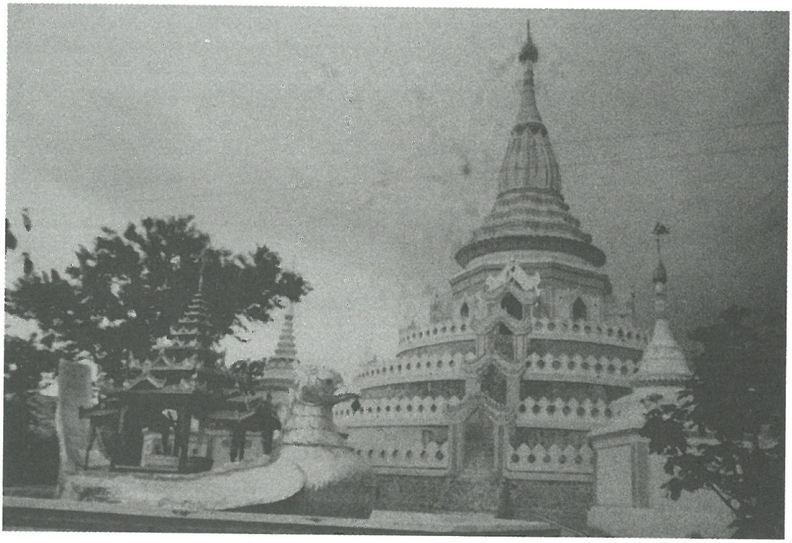
The Indian national Anuradah very rightly expressed that religion is not in the tongue but in the heart of the Burmese people.

Procession in Rangoon

As the Bo sapling and the sacred relics were taken to the inner court of Shwe Dagon Dagaba premises there came a heavy pouring of rain. Disregarding the rain we placed the sacred relics in the special place prepared and paid homage. From then thousands of devotees worshipped the relics until the relics were taken to the train leaving at 8.00 p. m. for Mandalay.

Until 8.00 p.m I rested at Dr. Thin Thin's residence and went to Shwe Dagon Dagaba and took the sacred relics and the Bo sapling to the Rangoon Railway station in a procession of vehicles, along with those in charge of them. Seats were reserved for about 50 people who accompanied me. I placed the sacred relics most reverently on a small table and sat nearby. At 9 next morning the train reached Thasi railway station.

Between Rangoon and Thasi there was only one stop. There was a great plain. This area would have been once a very fertile paddy land. Even today, on either side of the road large paddy lands, vegetable patches and cane plantation spread out. It could be seen that the agricultural economy is declining. Though there were the traditional lever systems to draw water from wells, I did not see any old or new irrigation system.



Pagodas in Rangoon

Whenever one looks out of the railway window, one invariable sight is the clusters of Dagabas. Sometimes, a particular village has quite a number of Dagabas. All these are coated in gold, built to the shape of the Shwe Dagon Dagaba. A common sight was the Buddhist monks with the bowl for alms.

There was one tractor station, but no tractors were in use. Buffalo and cattle are used for paddy field work. Transport of goods is by cart. Carts drawn by horses are used for the transportation of people. A very old bus or a lorry was seen on the main road. Like in India people travel on top of these vehicles.

Followers of Ven. Siyadow Thero had come by vehicles to meet us. They worshipped in great reverence the sacred relics and the Bo sapling and accompanied us in vehicles to Mithila town, spending about 1½ hours on the journey. In Burma, vehicles keep to the right. There are left and right hand drive vehicles on the roads, which were tarred only for a width of six feet. But in that six-foot roadway, unlike our roads had no potholes.

Mithila town is situated bordering a lake. We heard that this town once was very prosperous. We went directly to the very largest temple. The people in charge and a large gathering received us most respectfully. The faith of the Burmese Buddhists is such that until we passed them by they knelt in reverence by the road side. They worshipped me kneeling down and knowing that the worshipping was for the relics and not for me, no pride arose in me.

We had our breakfast and lunch at Mithila temple. There was opportunity for a nice cool bath. While we were resting a large

Ven. Siyadow welcomed us in mithila

number of devotees came and worshipped the sacred relics and the Bo sapling. It is a custom in Burma when worshipping, money too is put inside the container in which sacred items are placed. While the procession is in progress people throw flower petals, popped grain and money and later people rush to pick up the coins.

The procession left Mithila around 1.00 p.m, deviating from the main road on to the gravel road.

This is a very dry area, bringing to mind our dry zone. Roads are like our village council roads stretching across neglected land areas that no other vehicle but a jeep can be driven. I was surprised to notice the pickups, Hyno bus and other vehicles driven across drains without water, irrigation systems and even rivers.

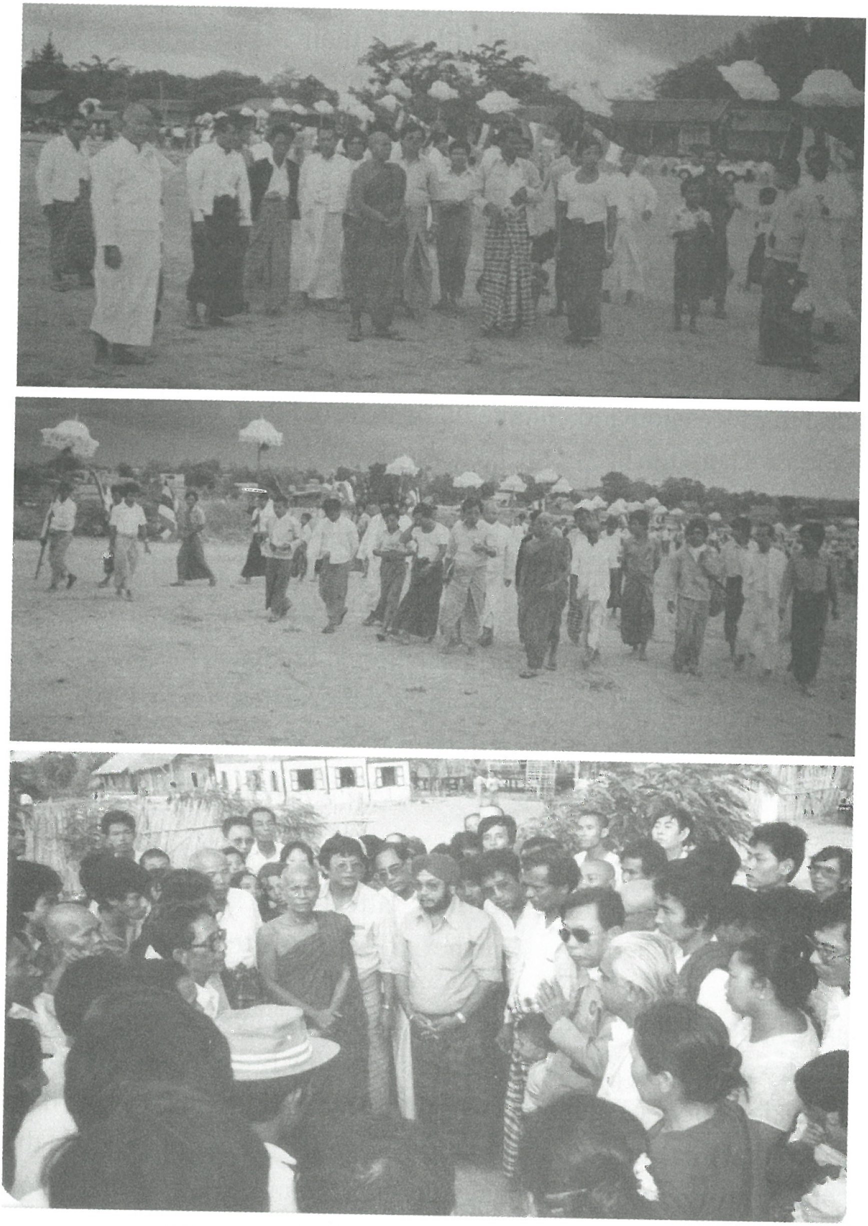
We passed quite a number of villages, their main buildings being Dagabas. We saw only one school in Mithila. People on either side of the road knelt down and waited until we passed them. In three villages, devotees came up, worshipped the sacred items and donated money.

It took three hours to travel 18 miles. We reached the temple around 4.00 p.m. About half a mile distance from the temple; people carrying 108 white umbrellas, branches of trees, flowers and Buddhist flags came in procession and conducted us to Ven. Siyadaw's temple. Ven. Siyadaw Thero too had come up to receive us.

I was very tired, but in order for the manslaughter in Sri Lanka to be stopped and peace established, with pure thought I would be handing over the Bo sapling and the Sacred relics to Ven. Siyadaw Thero very shortly. With thousands of Buddhist clergy, I reached the sacred area. Ven. Siyadaw Thero and a few others were seated. I worshipped the Ven. Thero. I offered the sacred items to the Ven. Thero who touched them and the people in charge took them to the shrine where they were to be deposited.

We went to the dormitory building; I attended to my personal needs, had tea and stretched myself on the bed for a little rest.

Time is about 6.00 p.m. now. There was darkness surrounding us. The sky which had hardly any clouds was now full of clouds. With the heavy downpour of rain there was thunder and lightning. People there told us that this rain was about half the rain for the entire year and that it broke the nine months of heavy drought. I came to know later, about what Ven. Siyadaw had said. "If there was holiness in the sacred items

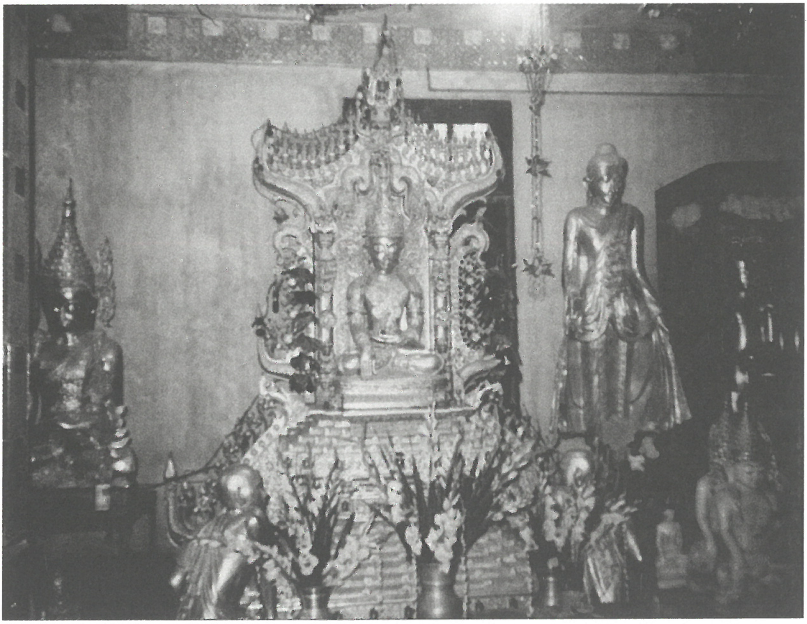


We were conducted in a long procession

I carried, there would be rain."

The temple premises extend to about seventy two acres. This was the abode of a hermit sometime back. It appears that this hermit had predicted that a great Buddhist monk would build a temple and the area would become very prosperous.

The Ven. Thero had come there and within one day had built the Dagaba after which many Dagabas were built from time to time.



Shrine room in the temple

In the Dagaba premises there are many Buddha statues. In addition, now, there are Dewalas (places of worship of gods) dedicated to god Vishnu, goddess Patthini and Shiva and Kali dewala in the construction stage. I spent the next day entirely looking around the

Davalas in the temple

temple premises. I saw Ven. Siyadaw Thero having discussions with a committee regarding the structure for the sacred relics and the place for planting of the Bo sapling.

Ven. Siyadaw Thero had made arrangements for about 25 Tamil speaking devotees from Mandalay, to prepare my food. According to Ramasamy, the leader of the group, for about 20 years they had been with the Ven. Thero and they were Buddhist.

During the time I spent at the temple of the Ven. Siyadaw, I heard an interesting story. I have so far not been able to find out the historical truth or falsity of this.

During the Kandyan regime, the King of Burma had come to worship Shri Daladawa (sacred Temple of the Tooth). The Kandyan King's daughter was given in marriage to the King of Burma. The king returned to Burma with the young queen and lived happily for some time. It was the custom of Burmese kings to visit far off places in the country and live there for weeks and months. One day the king, the queen and their retinue were passing a very primitive area. No one wore clothes in this village. Seeing this, the Sinhala queen laughed aloud. In Burma laughing aloud in front of the king is prohibited. That was the prevailing custom then. If someone were to laugh aloud in front of the king such person's head would be chopped off instantaneously. The king pulled out his sword and chopped off his queen's head. In that instant a great storm started with lightening. Through the bright light which emanated with this storm, there arose a very clear image of a celestial damsel, which reached the top of a hill nearby. The king believing that the female form was his beautiful Sinhala princess living there as a goddess, and in her name built a dewala at the spot.

It appears that from time to time this goddess visits Ven. Siyadaw Thero and provides him with information regarding Sri Lanka. While I was in Bangkok some months back, the Ven. Thero had sent me, through Dr. Mrs. Thin Thin, a bowl, yellow robe, spoon, a cloth spread, used as chair cover. These apparently were sent by the Ven. Thero at the request of the goddess. I kept the bowl in my shrine room for some time and offered it to Ven. Ariyawansa Thero of Anuradhapura, intending to transfer merit to my mother. The other gifts are still with me. It appears that it was through the advice of this celestial damsel, that the Ven. Siyadaw got me to bring a sapling of the Sri Maha Bodhi, a model of Anuradhapura, a model of the Temple of the Tooth and the two relics.

I do not know the truth or otherwise of this. But there are many things that we do not know, and since there was nothing wrong in his advice, I acted accordingly.

One day, Ven. Siyadaw Thero was meditating in the forest. A heavy rain started pouring and people with umbrellas ran to give shelter to the Ven. Thero. They saw the Ven. Thero in meditation, but there was no rain around the place where he meditated. They believe that gods from above were holding umbrellas to protect the Ven. Thero from rain.

Another story among the people is that the Ven. Thero had accepted invitations by two parties and he was there at both places at the same time.

Ven. Thero does not wear leather slippers. Everyone believes that people who visit him have their wishes fulfilled.

As a tradition Ven. Thero is not invited outside the village. Devotees visit him at his temple. He does not get angry any time. He meditates for peace for everyone. When the problem of Cuban Missiles arose and America and Russia were getting ready for war, the Ven. Thero had asked for a map of the world and he had placed his hand on the particular spot and attained to Dhyana stage (The highest form of one minded concentration)and had sent out energies.

About two years back, Ven. Thero had told his followers, Three days from today there will be a massive manslaughter at Sri Maha Bodhi and around Ruwanvelilmahaseya resulting in the loss of about 300 human beings. The country, nation and the religion are in great peril. Therefore, from today I am meditating for peace to prevail in Sri

Lanka." So saying, he had marked three places in the temple premises. He had mentioned that at one place a model of Siri Dalada temple should be placed, at the second place a Bo sapling from the Sri Maha Bodhi should be planted and the at third place a model of Ruwanveliseya should be erected. When these three requirements are completed Sri Lanka would be blessed with peace. My action was the result of this sacred request by the Ven.Thero.

It is the belief of many people that Ven. Siyadaw Thero gets his work done by divine beings. I looked around all sections of the temple. There are many places that he meditates in; a large walking path and a small flat area in the forest. All these buildings were constructed by devotees of a small town named Promi.

The temple is built at a central spot and on the other side of the road are many houses where about 300 people are living. Their entire life style is in harmony with the environment of the temple. At the time the Ven. Siyadaw Thero came, the people of the area were heavily on to crime. Gradually, the Ven. Thero had got them into the right path. Presently, individuals addicted to substance abuse are brought there.

Three times a day, a flower is offered before the Dagaba and the Pethi Pilima (Buddha statue) It is a fine sight for the eye to see, young women, nicely dressed walking in rows and offering flowers. I was fortunate to meditate inside the private meditation kuti (place for meditation) of the Ven. Thero. It is the same way, as we do in Sri Lanka, that people prepare alms for the Ven. Thero. With much devotion, food is prepared at the highest level of cleanliness. It is surprising to notice the quality of treatment the compassionate, virtuous clergy get from the public.

Offering flowers with Dr. Thin Thin and others

I went inside the Dharmasala (place where sermons are delivered) when the public visited the Ven. Thero. Devotees offer many items. He touches them and gives them to someone by his side. I offered him a picture album of our meditation in June. It is his habit to keep whatever is needed for his personal use and distribute the rest.

One day, when I was returning after meals, some people came over and a young girl, head shaven, dressed in cloth and jacket knelt in front of me and held my feet. I did not allow people to take her away. I put my hands on her head and blessed that her mental sickness be cured. Later on, I heard what the Ven. Thero had mentioned; a divine being that had come from Sri Lanka had made her sick and with my return to Sri Lanka her sickness would be over.

I could not go anywhere in private. May be because I am the first foreigner to come there and the people started worshipping me.

I do not like anyone worshipping me. But I must respect them. All these worshipping is not for me but for the Triple Gem. I am humble to think this way. Very often I feel like renouncing the worldly life. When I meet religious personalities, I feel that I have gone far beyond them. This egoistic thinking is a craving which has to cease. I do not know how long it is going to take for this to happen.

inside the preaching hall

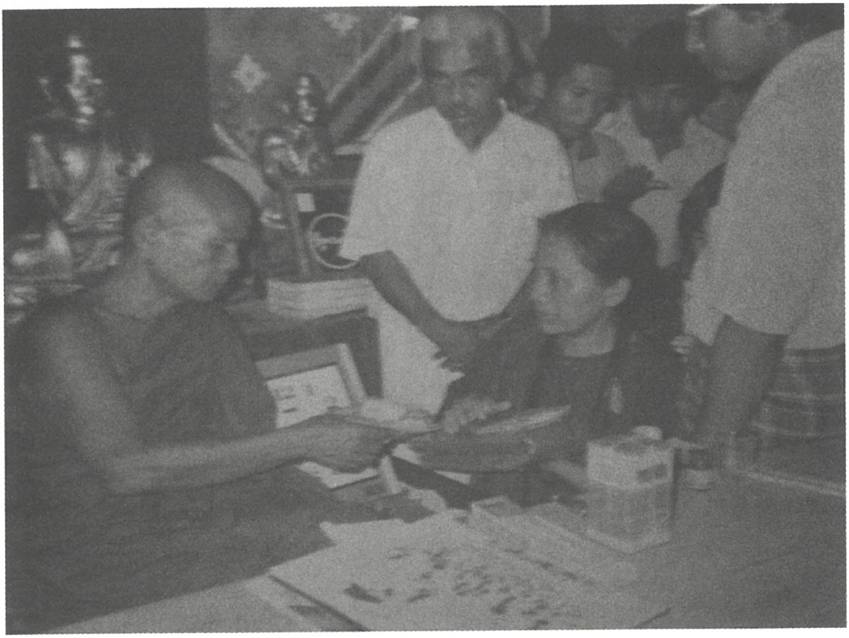
After thousands of years, carrying sacred relics, I am the first foreign visitor to come to this temple. I wanted to receive blessings from Ven. Siyadaw Thero personally, which opportunity, I was fortunate to get on 26th morning between 5 and 7. Dr. Mrs. Thin Thin functioned as my interpreter.

I worshipped the Ven. Thero and sat by his side. I made it known to him that peace in Sri Lanka was my first objective.

The path you have followed so far is right. You will know the results the day you leave Burma to Sri Lanka. One and a half hours before you land in Sri Lanka, Indian Prime Minister Rajeev Gandhi will land in Sri Lanka. The same day he will sign a peace agreement with your President. There will be trouble in the South. But that will soon be over. Peace in the North and the East will at least be temporarily achieved. You continue with the programmes of releasing positive energies. It may take time, but peace will dawn when sufficient spiritual energies are released.

The Ven. Thero, devoid of worldly attachment has not gone out of his village. He speaking in this manner made me grealyt surprised. I listened to him further. He told me that I should get the blessings of Sithra, Swasdhi, Visaka and Anuradha. He wanted me to conduct the October programme as planned and by that time all dangerous situations would cease to exist. I should also light 108 oil lamps as offerings to Buddha on behalf of Kali Amma. Kali Amma had put the minds of Sri Lankan people into confusion as damage had been caused to a statue of Kali Amma and if she receives merit she would help resolve the problem of the confused state.

Anyone entering this place would not entertain any doubts about the deep spirituality the Ven. Thero is endowed with. He has realised the value of purifying the minds of people. My belief is the same. He took me into his inner chamber. While chanting something very fast he rubbed my palm with his palm. I came out of the chamber and enquired from Dr. Mrs. Thin Thin the meaning of what the Ven. Thero chanted. The explanation - Ven. Thero has bestowed on me his power so that I am able to face any situation. When the need arises, I should raise my right hand and use the power. If I can send my programmes to him prior to the event, he will be with us at the time the programmes are conducted.



With Ven. Siyadow, and Dr. Thin Thin

I prepared myself for the return journey. I thanked everyone who was of help to me. Never will I forget the faces of some of these people who knelt before me and worshipped me. Their entire life is dedicated to religious activities. The mentally disturbed young girl too came and worshipped me.

Leaving the temple of Ven. Siyadaw, we are now returning by the old Hyno bus, travelling along gravel roads. There are no culverts, or bridges, but lakes and waterways only. The bus driver did a wonderful job of driving the old bus through waterways. It is indeed

Those who looked after me

praiseworthy I remember how we went on pilgrimages in Swarnamali buses in the past. Reaching the tarred road around 10.30 a.m we travelled along the tarred road to Mandale which we reached after two hours.

After lunch we visited six temples in Mandale and at 9.00 p.m took the train to Rangoon. While we were in the train the morning of the 27th dawned; we reached Rangoon by 12noon after being for 15 hours in the train. After five days of adventurous experiences I had lunch at the Rangoon Hotel, Rangoon and slept there.

I spoke to our ambassador Mr. Kalidasa De Silva on the 'phone and he visited me in the Hotel carrying a telex message that Vinya is in a hospital in Manila afflicted with chickenpox, if possible, for me to see him in Manila. I paid ten dollars to the hotel and went to the residence of Dr. Mrs. Thin Thin. There were many people with gifts to see me. At around two o'clock we went to the airport where I met many followers of Ven. Siyadaw. They had come to bid me farewell.

They were waving until the aircraft took off. Ralf Houtman Malli was at the airport to meet me. We went to his residence, spoke to Vinya on the 'phone and left to a hotel for dinner with Lalitha and Leech.

As I landed in Katunayake Airport I was informed, true to the prediction of the Ven. Siyadaw Thero, that the entire country was in a disturbed state owing to the visit of the Indian Prime Minister Mr. Rajeev Gandhi and signing of the Peace Agreement.From Katunayake to Moratuwa either side of the road was one heap of burning vehicles and buildings. I raised my right hand and received protection as instructed by the Ven. Thero. It was possible for my vehicle to find the way from Colombo to Moratuwa without any incidents. When my vehicle was stopped at the Wellawatte Bridge, Col. Janaka Perera made all arrangements for me to reach my home in Moratuwa without any trouble. As we turned from the Rawatawatte junction to de Zoysa Road we heard gun shots.

EPILOGUE

When we were young we were influenced by the book' Revolution under the breadfruit tree'. We received guidance by learning about lives of the noble heroes who won their life, lay and clergy alike. The social, cultural and economical development exerted through Sarvodaya and the life of Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne is unanimously integrated like the bark of the tree. The 3rd book of Bava Thanha reveals the development stages of Sarvodaya, the challenges, the issues, the barriers faced and how Sarvodaya weathered all the hardships displaying utmost courage and strength. The independence of the Sarvodaya Leader is exceptional. He was a selfless man who ascended while living according to Buddhist values. While learning and portraying through example as to what is taught through Buddhism, on how to manage spiritual development to achieve material development together with a country's social wellbeing, he respects all religions, communities and cultures of the world. Thus with the merits of such a fountain he nourishes Sri Lanka while Sarvodaya established upon a philosophy of trust blooms our lives. Let's find vision through the life story of our insatiable hero of the social and cultural awakening, Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne.

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A.T. Ariyaratne

EPILOGUE

The Sarvodaya Movement brought about a historical revolutionary change in the newly independent Sri Lankan society. The impact Sarvodaya Movement brought about in the value system in our country, development process the country was following and political and administrative leadership in our country also affected us, the Maha Sanga as a community. Sarvodaya brought lot of new light into our lives. Because of the politicization that took place in our country the service Sarvodaya renderd to our nation was not properly recognized in recent times. But nobody can erase the place that Sarvodaya occupies in the history of our country.

Most Venerable
Aththudawe Rahula Nayaka Thero
Chief Sanga Nayaka of
Southern Sri Lanka

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